

Governor Martin O'Malley  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

July 22, 2014

Dear Governor O'Malley:

We, the undersigned civil and human rights organizations, faith-based groups, legal service providers, and law professors write to thank you for your courageous response to the unfolding child refugee crisis. We applaud your statement that “[w]e are not a country that should turn children away and send them back to certain death,” and we wholeheartedly support your efforts to find shelter for them in Maryland. We write now to offer our help and to reaffirm the importance of ensuring that any chosen sites be appropriate for children and as close as possible to legal service providers and supportive community organizations.

Like you, we strongly believe that the best arrangement for unaccompanied children is to send them to relatives living in the United States while their immigration cases proceed and, if no relatives are available, to place them in foster homes or to provide temporary housing in a humane setting appropriate for children. We reiterate our firm belief that any site in Maryland should genuinely be a *shelter*, not a detention center euphemistically referred to as a shelter. To that end, we support your effort to continue looking for child-appropriate locations that are the least restrictive and most humane possible, where education and services can readily be provided, and where the children are nurtured and protected.

We also emphasize the importance of proximity to legal service providers, in order to minimize the number of children who are forced to appear in immigration court unrepresented, and to community organizations, in order to facilitate access to as much programming and community support as possible. And we firmly agree with you that they should not be placed in parts of the state where they may be exposed to targeting and harassment by local residents.

We thank you again for your leadership on this issue. You have had the integrity to recognize this crisis for what it is: a situation that requires our compassion and help, not an inconvenience to be resolved by shipping refugees back to violent and dangerous situations without proper consideration of their claims to asylum or other legal relief. And, in contrast to the xenophobic responses fleeing children have received elsewhere, you are ready to welcome them into our state. We stand ready to offer our assistance and support.

We hope the effort to find suitable accommodations for the child refugees in Maryland is successful. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Sirine Shebaya at [shebaya@aclu-md.org](mailto:shebaya@aclu-md.org) or at (410) 889-8555 and George Escobar at [gescobar@casamd.org](mailto:gescobar@casamd.org) or at (202) 320-0703.

Sincerely,

Civil, human rights, and faith-based organizations:

American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland  
CASA de Maryland  
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, Immigration  
Legal Services  
Central American Resource Center (CARECEN)  
Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.  
Immigration Clinic, University of Maryland Carey School of Law\*  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Maryland Disability Law Center  
Maryland Working Families  
Open Society Institute - Baltimore  
Power Inside  
Public Justice Center  
Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.  
World Relief Baltimore Immigration Legal Clinic

Legal Service Providers:

Bromberg, Kohler Maya & Maschler, PLLC  
Grossman Law, LLC  
Herischi & Associates LLC  
Immigrants First, PLLC  
Fr. David Brooks, SJ  
Jacqueline Bradley Chacon, Esq.

Legal Academics:

Immigration Clinic, University of Maryland Carey School of Law\*  
*Barbara Babb*, Associate Professor, Director, Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts, University of Baltimore School of Law\*  
*Fred Brown*, Associate Professor, Director, Graduate Tax Program, University of Baltimore School of Law\*  
*Gloria Danziger*, Senior Fellow, Sayra and Neil Meyerhoff Center for Families, Children and the Courts, University of Baltimore School of Law\*  
*Amy Dillard*, Associate Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law\*  
*Michele Gilman*, Professor, Director, Civil Advocacy Clinic, Co-Director, Center on Applied Feminism, University of Baltimore School of Law\*  
*David Jaros*, Assistant Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

*Margaret E. Johnson*, Associate Professor, Director, Family Law Clinic, Co-Director, Center on Applied Feminism, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

*Elizabeth Keyes*, Assistant Professor, Director, Immigrant Rights Clinic, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

*Jennifer Kim*, Visiting Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

*Matthew Lindsay*, Assistant Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

*Hugh McClean*, Visiting Professor, Director, Veterans Advocacy Clinic, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

*Nancy Modesitt*, Associate Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law\*

\*Institution listed for identification purposes only.