



**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SAFETY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE**

Mission Statement

On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the Public Safety and Government Operations Committee will be responsible for matters concerning public safety, including, but not limited to; emergency preparedness, police services, fire/EMS, and the executive, administrative, and operational functions of the city government and libraries.

**The Honorable Mark Conway
Chair**

PUBLIC HEARING

**Wednesday, April 10, 2024
1:00 PM**

CLARENCE "DU" BURNS COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Ordinance 23-0438

Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - Establishment

CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

Sharon Green Middleton, Chair
John Bullock – Vice Chair
Mark Conway
Ryan Dorsey
Antonio Glover
Odette Ramos
Robert Stokes

Staff: Anthony Leva (410-396-1091)

WAYS AND MEANS (W&M)

Eric Costello, Chair
Kristerfer Burnett
Ryan Dorsey
Danielle McCray
Sharon Green Middleton
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Robert Stokes

Staff: Marguerite Currin (443-984-3485)

PUBLIC SAFETY AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS (SGO)

Mark Conway – Chair
Kristerfer Burnett
Zeke Cohen
Erick Costello
Antonio Glover
Phylicia Porter
Odette Ramos

Staff: Anthony Leva (410-396-1091)

FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE (FP)

John Bullock, Chair
Eric Costello, Vice Chair
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Danielle McCray
Phylicia Porter

Staff: Marguerite Currin (443-984-3485)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW)

President Nick Mosby, Chair
All City Council Members

Staff: Larry Greene (410-396-7215)

EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND YOUTH (EWY)

Robert Stokes – Chair
John Bullock
Zeke Cohen
Antonio Glover
Sharon Green Middleton
Phylicia Porter
James Torrence

Staff: Deontre Hayes (410-396-1260)

HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY (HET)

Danielle McCray – Chair
John Bullock
Mark Conway
Ryan Dorsey
Phylicia Porter
James Torrence

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer

Staff: Deontre Hayes (410-396-1260)

RULES AND LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT (OVERSIGHT)

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer, Chair
Kristerfer Burnett
Mark Conway
Eric Costello
Sharon Green Middleton
Odette Ramos
James Torrence

Staff: Richard Krummerich (410-396-1266)

LEGISLATIVE INVESTIGATIONS (LI)

Eric Costello, Chair
Sharon Green Middleton, Vice Chair
Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Robert Stokes
Danielle McCray

Staff: Marguerite Currin (443-984-3485)



SYNOPSIS

Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations

Bill: 23-0438

Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs – Establishment

Sponsor: Councilmember Ramos

Introduced: October 16th, 2023

Purpose:

FOR the purpose of establishing the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs; defining certain terms, providing for the establishment of the Office; articulating the purpose of the Office; establishing the powers and duties of the Office; providing for the administration, staffing, and budget of the Office; and requiring the Office to submit a certain annual report.

BY adding to

- Article 1 - Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies
- Sections 54-1 to 54-7 to be under the new subtitle designation
“Subtitle 54. Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs”
- Baltimore City Code
(Edition 2000)

Effective: On the 30th day from the date enacted

AGENCY REPORTS

Department of Finance	Does not oppose
Office of Equity & Civil Rights	Favorable
Office of Immigration Affairs	Favorable
City Solicitor’s Office	
Mayor's Office	

ANALYSIS

Bill Summary

This bill if enacted would establish the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs in the City Code.

The bill would define an immigrant as a resident of Baltimore City whose country of origin is other than the United States.

The bill provides for the Office to have a Director (appointed by the Mayor), staff, and funds and empowers the Office with the following powers and responsibilities.

1. Advise City Officials (Mayor, Council & Agencies) on ways to enhance and improve access to services and resources.
2. Advise City Officials (Mayor, Council & Agencies) on opportunities for immigrants to participate in City life.
3. Implement and coordinate City policies affecting immigrant communities.
4. Advocate for equal treatment for immigrants and equitable access to City services.
5. Review proposed legislation and assess its impact on immigrant communities.
6. Improve services available to immigrants by advocating for changes in:
 - a. Public Policy
 - b. Service Delivery
 - c. Funding
7. Develop, implement, & coordinate policies to meet compliance with federal, state, and local language access laws.
8. Advance the Office's mission by working with:
 - a. City Agencies
 - b. City Boards
 - c. City Commissions
 - d. Community Organizations
 - e. The Private Sector
9. Serve as the liaison between the City and its immigrant communities.
10. Establish and staff community advisory groups relevant to the Office.
11. Solicit Community and stakeholder input on the Office's activities.
12. Other duties as assigned by the Mayor.

The Office of Immigrant Affairs would also be responsible for an annual report to the Mayor and City Council detailing 1. the activities of the Office, 2. Policy or legislative proposals. This report would be due June 30th of each year.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fiscal Note: None

Information Source(s): 24-0438 1st reader, Agency Reports,

Analysis by: Anthony Leva
Analysis Date: April 4, 2024

Direct Inquiries to: 410-396-1091

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 23-0438
(First Reader)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Ramos

At the request of: The Administration (Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs)

Introduced and read first time: October 16, 2023

Assigned to: Public Safety and Government Operations Committee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Office of the Mayor, Office of Equity and Civil Rights, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 **Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs – Establishment**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs; defining certain terms,
4 providing for the establishment of the Office; articulating the purpose of the Office;
5 establishing the powers and duties of the Office; providing for the administration, staffing,
6 and budget of the Office; and requiring the Office to submit a certain annual report.

7 BY adding to

8 Article 1 - Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies
9 Sections 54-1 to 54-7 to be under the new subtitle designation
10 "Subtitle 54. Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs"
11 Baltimore City Code
12 (Edition 2000)

13 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
14 Laws of Baltimore City read as follows:

15 **Baltimore City Code**

16 **Article 1. Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies**

17 **SUBTITLE 54. MAYOR'S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS**

18 **§ 54-1. DEFINITIONS.**

19 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

20 IN THIS SUBTITLE, THE FOLLOWING TERMS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

21 (B) *DIRECTOR.*

22 "DIRECTOR" MEANS THE DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Council Bill 23-0438

1 (C) *IMMIGRANT*.

2 “IMMIGRANT” MEANS AN INDIVIDUAL:

3 (1) WHO IS A RESIDENT OF BALTIMORE CITY; AND

4 (2) WHOSE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IS A COUNTRY OTHER THAN THE UNITED STATES.

5 (D) *OFFICE*.

6 “OFFICE” MEANS THE MAYOR’S OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS.

7 **§ 54-2. OFFICE ESTABLISHED.**

8 THERE IS AN OFFICE OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS IN THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR.

9 **§ 54-3. PURPOSE.**

10 THE PURPOSE OF THE OFFICE IS TO PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
11 AND INTEGRATION OF BALTIMORE CITY’S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES.

12 **§ 54-4. OFFICE – POWERS AND DUTIES.**

13 THE OFFICE SHALL HAVE THE POWER AND DUTY TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING FUNCTIONS:

14 (1) ADVISE THE MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND CITY AGENCIES ON WAYS TO ENHANCE AND
15 IMPROVE ACCESS TO CITY SERVICES AND RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANTS;

16 (2) ADVISE THE MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL, AND CITY AGENCIES ON WAYS TO STRENGTHEN
17 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMMIGRANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CIVIC LIFE OF THE CITY;

18 (3) IMPLEMENT AND COORDINATE CITY POLICIES REGARDING ISSUES AFFECTING
19 IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES;

20 (4) ADVOCATE FOR EQUAL TREATMENT OF IMMIGRANTS AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CITY
21 SERVICES;

22 (5) REVIEW PROPOSED LEGISLATION REFERRED TO THE OFFICE BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND
23 ASSESS ITS IMPACT ON THE ECONOMIC, PHYSICAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND
24 INTELLECTUAL WELFARE OF IMMIGRANTS;

25 (6) IMPROVE THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO IMMIGRANTS BY ADVOCATING FOR CHANGES
26 IN:

27 (I) PUBLIC POLICY;

28 (II) SERVICE DELIVERY; AND

29 (III) FUNDING;

Council Bill 23-0438

1 (7) DEVELOP, IMPLEMENT, AND COORDINATE POLICIES THAT FACILITATE CITY AGENCIES'
2 COMPLIANCE WITH ALL FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LANGUAGE ACCESS LAWS;

3 (8) ADVANCE THE OFFICE'S MISSION BY WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

4 (I) CITY AGENCIES;

5 (II) CITY BOARDS;

6 (III) CITY COMMISSIONS;

7 (IV) COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS; AND

8 (V) THE PRIVATE SECTOR;

9 (9) SERVE AS A LIAISON BETWEEN THE CITY AND ITS IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES;

10 (10) ESTABLISH AND STAFF COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUPS TO PROVIDE STRATEGIC
11 GUIDANCE AND MONITORING OF INITIATIVES RELEVANT TO THE PURPOSE OF THE
12 OFFICE;

13 (11) SOLICIT COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT REGARDING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
14 OFFICE, INCLUDING CONSULTATIONS WITH CITY AGENCIES, BOARDS, AND
15 COMMISSIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES RELEVANT TO
16 IMMIGRANTS; AND

17 (12) PERFORM OTHER DUTIES AS REQUIRED BY THE MAYOR.

18 **§ 54-5. DIRECTOR.**

19 (A) *IN GENERAL.*

20 THERE IS A DIRECTOR OF IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
21 ADMINISTRATION AND OVERSIGHT OF THE OFFICE.

22 (B) *APPOINTMENT.*

23 THE DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE IV, § 6 OF
24 THE CITY CHARTER.

25 (C) *SALARY.*

26 THE DIRECTOR SHALL RECEIVE SUCH SALARY AS MAY BE PROVIDED IN THE ORDINANCE OF
27 ESTIMATES.

28 **§ 54-6. STAFF AND BUDGET.**

29 (A) *STAFF.*

30 THE OFFICE MAY EMPLOY STAFF IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORDINANCE OF ESTIMATES.

Council Bill 23-0438

1 (B) *BUDGET.*

2 THE OFFICE MAY EXPEND FUNDS AUTHORIZED IN THE ORDINANCE OF ESTIMATES OR ANY
3 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION.

4 **§ 54-7. ANNUAL REPORT.**

5 ON OR BEFORE JUNE 30 OF EACH YEAR, THE OFFICE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE MAYOR
6 AND CITY COUNCIL DETAILING:

7 (1) THE ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE; AND

8 (2) ANY SPECIFIC POLICY OR LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO ADVANCE THE GOALS OF THE
9 OFFICE AND THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN BALTIMORE.

10 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the 30th day
11 after the date it is enacted.

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE**

23-0348

**Mayor's Office of Immigrant
Affairs - Establishment
AGENCY REPORTS**



CITY OF BALTIMORE
MAYOR BRANDON M. SCOTT

TO	The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
FROM	Dana Petersen Moore Director of the Office of Equity and Civil Rights Baltimore City Chief Equity Officer
DATE	April 7, 2024
SUBJECT	OECR Report on Council Bill 23-0438 Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs - Establishment

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
Baltimore, MD 21202

DATE: April 7, 2024

OECR Position: Favorable

SUMMARY OF POSITION

The Office of Equity and Civil Rights (OECR) has reviewed and is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0438 regarding establishment of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs.

The bill accomplishes the following:

- Established the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs
- Defines certain terms such as “Director”, “Immigrant” and “Office”.
- Provides for the establishment of the Office, and that it will be in the Office of the Mayor.
- Clarifies that the purpose of the Office is to promote the well-being, economic development, and integration of Baltimore City’s immigrant communities.
- Establishes the powers and duties of the Office including advocating for equal treatment of immigrants and equitable access to City services, improving the services available to immigrants by advocating for changes in public policy, and serving as a liaison between the City and its immigrant communities.
- Provides for the administration, staffing, and budget of the Office.
- Requires the Office to submit an annual report on or before June 30 of each year.

The bill is pursuant to Article 1 – Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies, Sections 54-1 to 54-7, Baltimore City Code (Edition 2000).

ANALYSIS

Council Bill 23-0438 codifies in an impactful, substantive, and sustainable way the City of Baltimore's commitment to equitable treatment of all who live, work, play, learn, and visit the City. The bill creates an office that will be hyper focused on assuring that the City's growing immigrant population is positioned to receive all of the benefits and services as are available to Baltimore's non-immigrant community. In this sense the bill is another entry into Baltimore's collection of laws intended to protect basic human and civil rights.

Further, by including language mandating staff, budget allocations and clearly defined duties and powers, the bill assures that the office will have the funds it must have in order to function, and the clear mandate that it must have in order to effectuate necessary changes.

CONCLUSION

The OECR has reviewed the bill and finds no indicia of actual or implied inequity. Accordingly, the OECR supports a **favorable** committee report on Bill 23-0438.

Respectfully submitted,



Dana Petersen Moore, OECR Director



April 8, 2024

To the Honorable City Council President, Nick Mosby and
Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 409, City Hall
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 23-0438 –Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs – Establishment

The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0438 – Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs – Establishment.

As of 2021, approximately 50,000 foreign-born immigrants called Baltimore home. More than 17,000 have arrived since 2010 and the largest group came from Latin American countries, including substantial populations from Mexico, El Salvador, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and growing numbers from South America. While the Hispanic community is spread throughout many neighborhoods in the city, they are heavily clustered east of downtown around Patterson Park, Highlandtown, and Armistead Gardens. The City also has more than 13,000 immigrants from Asia, with significant populations from China, Korea, India, and the Philippines. Baltimore’s Asian populations are clustered around Johns Hopkins’ Homewood and medical campuses, as well as in downtown and midtown. The African foreign-born population stands at 8,169, with a significant population from Nigeria. In addition to immigrants, the city has a growing refugee community being resettled by various non-profit organizations in neighborhoods such as Reservoir Hill, Moravia, and Frankford

Also, Baltimore City is home to almost 54,000 individuals (9.3% of the city’s population) who speak a language other than English at home, and over 20,000 of those individuals speak English less than very well.¹ These individuals are *Limited English Proficient* (LEP), meaning that they do not speak English as their primary language and have limited ability to speak, write, or understand English.² Currently, the top five languages spoken by LEP individuals in Baltimore are: Spanish or Spanish Creole (8,837), Chinese (1,425), French (1,356), Korean (839), & Arabic (1,581).³

Immigrants bring diverse perspectives, skills, and experiences that enrich our City, but they also face unique challenges as they settle into a new home. In order to better serve this growing demographic and uphold our commitment to equity, inclusivity and diversity, it is imperative that we institutionalize MIMA.

MIMA’s mission is to promote the economic growth, community wellbeing and the integration of the approximately 50,000 foreign born individuals living in Baltimore City.

MIMA’s responsibilities include but are not limited to the following: advise the Mayor and Senior staff on matters related to foreign born communities; provide technical assistance to City agencies; source of information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) residents; manage the City’s language access program;

¹ [American Community Survey 2021 5-yr estimates](#)

² Definition from [LEP.gov](#)

³ [American Community Survey 2021 5-yr estimates](#)

communications and outreach of ethnic civic groups; advocacy; and respond to the needs of immigrants based on changes at the federal level.

The existence of MIMA has been critical to address the needs of New Americans moving to the City of Baltimore.

Rationale:

1. **Technical Assistance and Comprehensive Support:** Over the years, MIMA has served as a hub where City agencies can access information and resources related to demographics, language access, training, outreach strategies, messaging and communications, information dissemination, ethnic media, best practices, policies, and more. MIMA's work is to ensure that local government agencies are culturally competent and sensitive to the needs of immigrant communities as programs and services are developed and implemented.
2. **Messaging and Communications:** Clear communication is vital for both immigrants and the City of Baltimore. One of MIMA's roles is to facilitate communication tailored to immigrants' needs, ensuring that information about policies, events, and opportunities is accessible and understandable in the City's five core languages. This is critical as a third of the City's foreign-born population cannot read, write or speak English. MIMA employs various communication channels to keep communities informed such as a monthly newsletter, social media, biweekly community stakeholder calls, community events and collaborations with immigrant focused CBOs.
3. **Community Building and Engagement:** Immigrants often seek a sense of belonging and community in their new home. In response, MIMA coordinates community engagement and promotes civic participation, helping immigrants become active members of society. This includes organizing events, conducting outreach activities, hosting a civics academy program, soliciting input regarding local government programs, and staffing multiple community workgroups such as the Baltimore City Hispanic Commission, Language Access Oversight Committee, MIMA's Community Advisory Board, and the Asian American and Pacifica Island Workgroup.
4. **Language Access and Federal Compliance:** Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on national origin, which is interpreted to include language. In practice, City agencies must make a reasonable effort to provide access to services to the nearly 20,000 individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) living in Baltimore City. Since 2019, MIMA has been working with a number of City agencies receiving federal funds to achieve compliance. To that end, MIMA has secured funding to hire a Language Access Coordinator assist agencies with this federal requirement. Also, MIMA has developed and centralized language access resources (telephonic interpretation, written translation and training) for City employees to overcome language barriers when serving residents whose English is not their first language.
5. **Advocacy and Policy Development:** Codifying this office demonstrates our commitment to advocating for the rights and interests of immigrants. Over the years, MIMA has advocated for policies that benefit immigrants and has engaged in research and analysis to better understand the needs of immigrant communities. In this role, MIMA has informed



the development of more inclusive and effective policies and processes at the local, state, and federal level.

Benefits:

1. **Improved Integration:** By providing targeted resources, language support, and cultural integration programs, we ensure that immigrants can more effectively contribute to our City and society at large.
2. **Strengthened Relationships:** Codifying MIMA demonstrates our dedication to equity, diversity and inclusivity, fostering positive relationships with immigrant communities, faith-based institutions, and CBOs.
3. **Cultural Diversity and Innovation:** Immigrants bring unique perspectives, skills and cultural contributions to our City. This diversity can lead to increased innovation (i.e. start businesses and developing ethnic business enclaves) that can benefit our local economy.
4. **Soften Population Decline:** The presence of an immigrant community can create economic and social opportunities that can attract other immigrants to our City. In Baltimore, the immigrant population has been a consistent source of growth, mitigating overall population loss. From 2010 to 2021, the city's foreign-born population grew by over 4,571 people, a 9% growth rate compared to an overall population decrease of 44,000 people in the same period.

MIMA's codification is a strategic step that aligns with our City's values and commitment to equity and diversity. This office will serve as a hub for technical assistance, immigrant support, engagement, information, and advocacy, ultimately benefiting the City of Baltimore, our immigrant residents, and the broader community.

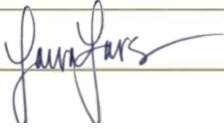

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs supports City Council Bill 23-0438.

For additional questions or concerns, contact:

Catalina Rodriguez Lima
Director

Catalina.rodriquez-lima@baltimorecity.gov

410-818-6193

FROM	NAME & TITLE	Laura Larsen, Budget Director 	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Finance Room 454, City Hall		
	SUBJECT	23-0438 Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - Establishment		

DATE:

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

April 9th, 2024

Position: Does Not Oppose

The Department of Finance is herein reporting on City Council Bill 23-0438, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - Establishment, the purpose of which is to establish the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. The Office will be responsible for advising the Mayor, City Council, and City agencies on ways to improve and ensure equitable access for immigrants to City services and resources and participation in City civic life; implementing, coordinating, and reviewing legislation and policies related to immigrant communities and compliance with related federal, state, and local access laws; advocating to improve outcomes for immigrants; serving as a liaison between the City and immigrant communities; establishing and staffing community advisory groups; and soliciting community and stakeholder input on programs and services related to immigrants.

Background

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) is an office within the Mayor's Office (Mayorality) responsible for promoting community wellbeing, economic development, and integration of immigrant communities. The office was formed in 2014 in response to a recommendation in 2013 by the New Americans Task Force to attract and retain immigrants. Since its creation, MIMA has prioritized the following:

1. Improving government accessibility by implementing language access programming with twelve City agencies and facilitating economic and civics-based educational opportunities for New Americans;
2. Supporting economic growth through management of a state grant that provides job placement and vocational training.
3. Partnering with the Latino Economic Development Center and Baltimore Development Corporation to support immigrant business owners; and
4. Ensuring community well-being by working with community-based organizations to connect families with access to services and working with City agencies to ensure compliance with best practices related to welcoming immigrant communities.

The proposed legislation seeks to formally codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) as a part of Mayorality. Under the legislation the formal responsibilities will include:

1. Advising the Mayor, City Council, and City agencies on ways to improve immigrant's access to City services and resources and participation in City civic life;
2. Implementing and coordinating policies related to immigrant communities and compliance with related federal, state, and local access laws;

3. Advocating for equal treatment of immigrants and equitable access to City services;
4. Reviewing proposed legislation related to immigrants;
5. Advocating for changes in public policy, service delivery, and funding to improve outcomes for immigrants;
6. Serving as a liaison between the City and immigrant communities;
7. Establishing and staffing community advisory groups;
8. Soliciting community and stakeholder input on programs and services related to immigrants; and
9. Developing and submitting an annual report to the Mayor and City Council.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

The Department of Finance anticipates no costs associated with enacting this legislation. Because this legislation is codifying the existing office and keeping the function within the Mayor's Office there are no additional administrative or overhead costs associated with implementing the legislation.

Conclusion

City Council Bill 23-0438, Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - Establishment proposes to codify MIMA as an office within the Mayoralty agency. Finance supports the intent of this legislation to codify MIMA and the work it does as a permanent component of City services and demonstrate the City's commitment to equity, diversity, and well-being of its immigrant population.

Finance anticipates that there will be no cost associated with enacting this legislation.

For the reasons stated above, the Department of Finance does not oppose City Council Bill 23-0438.

cc: Nina Themelis
Michael moiseyev

**PUBLIC SAFETY AND
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE**

23-0348

**Mayor's Office of Immigrant
Affairs - Establishment
ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

(410) 396 - 4814

odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 506

Baltimore MD 21202

Testimony

23-0438 - Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs - Establishment

April 10, 2024

Dear Chair Conway and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety and Government Operations Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present 23-0438 – Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs – Establishment, and I am humbly asking for your support.

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) was created 10 years ago to assist with the City's goals of becoming a welcoming city for our immigrant community. This legislation establishes MIMA in the Baltimore City Code. There will be no budget increases as a result of this action, as the MIMA office is already operational and has received a budget each year. We are not creating something new, we are codifying the existence of this office.

MIMA has played a critical role in welcoming our immigrant community. The office offers translation services to our agencies in five different languages, assist with case management partners, and interacts with our immigrant community so that they feel connected to City government. In crisis like COVID-19 and the recent Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse, MIMA has lead the charge in making sure that our immigrant families' needs are met.

Our immigrant community is the fastest growing population in our city. Our action to establish MIMA in code sends a clear signal that Baltimore City is ready and willing to welcome everyone who wishes to make a better life for themselves here.

Thank you for your consideration and your favorable report.

Should you have any questions, I can be reached on 443-801-8137 or odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Sincerely,

Odette Ramos
Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

Letter of Support for Bill 23-0438: MIMA Codification

Latino Providers Network <contact@lpnmd.org>

Tue 4/9/2024 8:46 AM

To: Conway, Mark (City Council) <Mark.Conway@baltimorecity.gov>; Burnett, Kristerfer (City Council) <Kristerfer.Burnett@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Costello, Eric (City Council) <Eric.Costello@baltimorecity.gov>; Glover, Antonio (City Council) <Antonio.Glover@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council) <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Ramos, Odette (City Council) <Odette.Ramos@baltimorecity.gov>; Leva, Anthony F (City Council) <anthony.leva@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; Themelis, Nina <Nina.Themelis@baltimorecity.gov>; Rodriguez, Catalina (Mayor's Office) <Catalina.Rodriguez-Lima@baltimorecity.gov>; Latino Providers Network <contact@lpnmd.org>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Baltimore City IT Network Systems.

Reminder: DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. Report any suspicious activities using the Report Phishing Email Button, or by emailing to Phishing@baltimorecity.gov

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Latino Providers Network, Inc. (LPN), I write to offer our support for Bill 23-0438, which seeks to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs within the Baltimore City Mayor's Office. Our base of operations is located in District 1 with member organizations from across Baltimore City.

The Latino Providers Network manages and coordinates a membership community base umbrella organization with over 70 organizations and 150 individual members that provide direct services to the Latino community in the Baltimore Metropolitan Region and across the State of Maryland in the areas of health, education, immigration, business, employment, and arts & culture. The mission of our organization is to maximize resources in the Latino community through advocacy, education, and networking, and our goal is to improve the quality, accessibility, and cultural competency of public and private services available to the Latino community in the Baltimore Metropolitan Region and throughout the State of Maryland. We believe in this work and do our best to provide these connections between the many organizations working within this community because we are stronger when working together.

The almost 50,000 individuals in Baltimore City who are immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees need representation and consideration in the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) provides essential advocacy, technical assistance, and community support for New Americans as well as the organizations that serve them. MIMA will best be able to support immigrant communities for years to come if they are codified as a required part of the Mayor's Office. No matter the political climate, immigrants in Baltimore should be guaranteed representation from their city officials.

MIMA has been an active participant and partner of the LPN since MIMA was created. MIMA brings unparalleled expertise to the table and is always willing to assist to tackle a problem or share knowledge with our membership, such as their recent presentation at a monthly LPN resource meeting on their efforts with Language Access. The power of our network is in the connections and the ability to make confident referrals to other member organizations. We know that when we connect someone to MIMA, they will get the assistance they need. The value they bring to the immigrant communities of Baltimore is too vital; MIMA must be codified as a required part of the Mayor's Office.

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has aided us in our mission to serve Baltimore City residents. We provide full support to Bill 23-0438 and urge you to consider passing Bill 23-0438 to codify MIMA. Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Best,

Cindy Kleback, Secretary/Treasurer
on behalf of the Board of Directors, Latino Providers Network

Latino Providers Network, Inc.
Email: contact@lpnmd.org
Website: www.lpnmd.org
Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Support for Bill 23-0438: MIMA Codification

Adonia Simpson <adonia.simpson@gmail.com>

Fri 4/5/2024 4:38 PM

To: Conway, Mark (City Council) <Mark.Conway@baltimorecity.gov>; Burnett, Kristerfer (City Council) <Kristerfer.Burnett@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Costello, Eric (City Council) <Eric.Costello@baltimorecity.gov>; Glover, Antonio (City Council) <Antonio.Glover@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council) <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Ramos, Odette (City Council) <Odette.Ramos@baltimorecity.gov>; Leva, Anthony F (City Council) <anthony.leva@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; Themelis, Nina <Nina.Themelis@baltimorecity.gov>; Rodriguez, Catalina (Mayor's Office) <Catalina.Rodriguez-Lima@baltimorecity.gov>; Stokes, Robert (City Council) <Robert.Stokes@baltimorecity.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Baltimore City IT Network Systems.

Reminder: DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. Report any suspicious activities using the Report Phishing Email Button, or by emailing to Phishing@baltimorecity.gov

Good afternoon, Chair Conway and members of the Baltimore City Public Safety & Government Operations Committee,

My name is Adonia Simpson, and I live in Greenmount West. I support Bill 23-0438 to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) within the Baltimore City Mayor's Office, and ask that you approve Bill 23-0438 favorably to the Baltimore City Council.

I am a two-time Baltimore City resident-- first from 2012 to 2016 and most recently since 2021. I have been an immigration attorney for 15 years and had the pleasure of living and practicing in various jurisdictions (Boston, Baltimore, and Miami). From 2012 to 2016, I managed the legal services program at the Esperanza Center, and since 2021 I have overseen policy and pro bono at the American Bar Association's Commission on Immigration. I have very close professional and personal ties to New Americans in Baltimore City. The support MIMA has provided newcomers in Baltimore is one of the reasons I chose to move back to Baltimore City from Miami, as opposed to DC or Virginia.

Immigrants make Baltimore a stronger, vibrant community, with immigrants sharing their cultures, labor, and contributing to the economy. Immigrants are putting down roots, starting businesses, and performing essential services. Supporting immigrant inclusion and integration is not only the right thing to do, but the smart choice.

I support Bill 23-0438 because I have seen first hand the incredible efforts of MIMA to support not only immigrants, but organizations serving immigrant communities. The initiatives of MIMA on language access, technical assistance, inclusion, and support to legal service organizations are akin to programs in some of the largest, most progressive cities in the nation. MIMA's response in difficult situations, such as the pandemic and the recent bridge collapse, is immediate and impactful. Codification of the office will mean MIMA will be able to continue to make Baltimore City a welcoming one, no matter the political climate.

Again, I urge you to take the necessary steps towards passing Bill 23-0438 to codify MIMA and ensure that our immigrant residents and communities continue to be represented in Baltimore City government. Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Adonia R. Simpson, Esq.
309 East Lafayette Ave.
Baltimore, MD 21202
(785) 766-4954
adonia.simpson@gmail.com

April 10, 2024

From: Valerie Twanmoh, Catholic Charities of Baltimore
320 Cathedral St, Baltimore, MD 21201

Re: Letter of Support for Bill 23-0438: MIMA Codification

Dear Chair Conway and members of the Baltimore City Public Safety & Government Operations Committee,

On behalf of Catholic Charities of Baltimore, I write to offer our support for Bill 23-0438, which seeks to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) within the Baltimore City Mayor's Office. Catholic Charities programs and services are located throughout the city and the region, with our primary administrative office located in the 11th district. Our over 2000 employees provide professional, caring, and compassionate direct services to families and communities in need, including childhood education, housing and services for seniors and those with developmental disabilities, temporary shelter and daily meals for those experiencing homelessness, behavioral health services for adults and children. For over 60 years, Catholic Charities' Esperanza Center in Fells Point has offered multi-lingual programs and services for immigrants and their families, from those recently arrived to those who have lived and worked in the Baltimore region for decades.

Assisting families with limited English proficiency and helping them to access available governmental and non-profit resources and information can be challenging, even for those familiar with the system. Sustainable funding for resources and staff to ensure effective access, along with dedicated support personnel, are critical components to this work, and MIMA is the piece that brings this all together. When the number of unaccompanied children arriving in Maryland reached record levels in 2014-15, it was MIMA who helped secure major funding to provide immigration legal services and other support for the children and their families. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Esperanza Center collaborated closely with MIMA, facilitating financial assistance to over 2000 families through the Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families (ERIF) program. Most recently, with the collapse of the Key Bridge, MIMA's advocacy ensured that impacted families received services in their native language and helped coordinate efforts to provide invaluable assistance and resources to the victims' families. MIMA's unwavering commitment and compassionate leadership have been instrumental in aiding the immigrant community during challenging times.

As organizations like Catholic Charities grapple with challenges, it is clear that external support, exemplified by entities like MIMA, is vital in helping to integrate immigrants into our communities. The almost 50,000 individuals in Baltimore City who are immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees require representation and consideration in the Mayor's Office. MIMA's provision of essential advocacy, technical assistance, and community support for New Americans, as well as the organizations that serve them, underscores its significance. Codifying MIMA as a required part of the Mayor's Office will ensure its continued ability to support immigrant communities effectively.

For these reasons, Catholic Charities of Baltimore urges the committee to issue a favorable report for Bill 23-0438.



To:

Chair Mark Conway, District 4 City Council Representative
Odette Ramos, District 14 City Council Representative
Kristerfer Burnett, District 8 City Council Representative
Zeke Cohen, District 1 City Council Representative
Eric Costello, District 11 City Council Representative
Antonio Glover, District 13 City Council Representative
Phylcia Porter, District 10 City Council Representative
Anthony Leva, Legislative Services Analyst

Copy:

Brandon M. Scott, Baltimore City Mayor
Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations Deputy Director
Catalina Rodriguez Lima, Director of the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

From: Pat Shannon Jones, Executive Director, Immigration Outreach Service Center

Date:

Subject: Letter of Support for Bill 23-0438: MIMA Codification

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of the Immigration Outreach Service Center (IOSC), I write to offer our support for Bill 23-0438, which seeks to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs within the Baltimore City Mayor's Office. We are located in the Third District with organization staff from across Baltimore City.

The IOSC was established in 2000 to serve immigrants in Baltimore City. The communities served by the IOSC was, initially, largely African immigrants. With the expansion of our work, our clients have come to us from 123 countries. We speak Spanish, French, Arabic, and several other dialects during our legal clinics.

Prior to the New American Task Force and the establishment of MIMA, small, immigrant-focused non-profits often felt isolated and limited in the work that could be done. With the advent of MIMA, we felt an enormous shift in the City's focus on immigrants. MIMA has championed the re-growth of Baltimore into a strong and vital community with immigrants as a force for the growth and vitality of the city.

The almost 50,000 individuals in Baltimore City who are immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees need representation and consideration in the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) provides essential advocacy, technical assistance, and community support for New Americans as well as the organizations that serve them. MIMA will best be able to support immigrant communities for years to come if they are codified as a required part of the Mayor's Office. No matter the political climate, immigrants in Baltimore should be guaranteed representation from their city officials.

Codification of MIMA would ensure that Baltimore is committed to its immigrants, families, and workers, who contribute a huge amount to the City's stability, growth, and success.

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has aided us in our mission to serve Baltimore City residents. We provide full support to Bill 23-0438 and urge you to consider passing Bill 23-0438 to codify MIMA. Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Shannon Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat Shannon Jones
Executive Director
Immigration Outreach Service Center (IOSC)
5405 Loch Raven Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21239
Office – 410-323-8564
Mobile – 443-631-0181
pat@ioscbaltimore.org



THE SHRIVER CENTER

April 8, 2024

Dear Mayor Scott and Baltimore City Councilmembers,

The Shriver Center at UMBC stands in strong support of [ordinance 23-0438](#) to codify the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. We believe that codifying this office is a critical step towards ensuring the well-being, integration, and empowerment of immigrant communities within our city and beyond.

At the Shriver Center, we recognize the invaluable contributions that immigrants make to our society, culture, and economy. We have students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds, representing experiences from more than 100 global nations and states and we celebrate the richness that this diversity brings to our campus community. We are also acutely aware of the challenges and barriers that immigrants too often face, including legal, economic, and social obstacles. Arriving in our Baltimore area is not enough; we want our newcomers to feel a sense of welcome and belonging.

The establishment of a dedicated office for immigrant affairs within the city government demonstrates a commitment to addressing these challenges proactively and collaboratively. By codifying this office, Baltimore City sends a clear message that immigrants are valued and full members of our community and that their needs and concerns are being prioritized. Moreover, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs plays a crucial role in promoting cultural understanding, facilitating access to essential services, and advocating for policies that promote the integration and empowerment of immigrants. Through its outreach efforts, resource allocation, and policy initiatives, this office serves as a vital lifeline for immigrant communities, helping them navigate complex systems and overcome systemic barriers.

As a minority-serving institution, we understand the importance of supporting and advocating for our marginalized communities. We believe that codifying the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic investment in the future prosperity and well-being of our city. Therefore, we urge you to codify the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and to provide the

necessary resources and support to sustain its success. Together, we can create a more inclusive, equitable, and vibrant city for all our residents. Regardless of their place of origin or immigration status, our city should be a safe and welcoming home.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the city government to advance the interests of immigrant communities and build a more just and inclusive society.

Sincerely,



Joby Taylor
Assistant Vice Provost, The Shriver Center at UMBC



Charlotte Keniston
Director, Shriver Peaceworker Fellows Program at UMBC



Valerie Pasi3n
Program Coordinator, Shriver Peaceworker Fellows Program at UMBC



Kelly Quinn, Ph.D.
Managing Director of The Choice Program at UMBC
Resident District 11

Paloma León

Paloma León

Assistant Director of Vocational Programming of The Choice Program at UMBC

Letter of Support for Bill 23-0438: MIMA Codification

TAMOJA Foundation <tamojafoundation@gmail.com>

Tue 4/9/2024 5:54 PM

To: Conway, Mark (City Council) <Mark.Conway@baltimorecity.gov>; Burnett, Kristerfer (City Council) <Kristerfer.Burnett@baltimorecity.gov>; Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; Costello, Eric (City Council) <Eric.Costello@baltimorecity.gov>; Glover, Antonio (City Council) <Antonio.Glover@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylcia R.L. (City Council) <Phylcia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Ramos, Odette (City Council) <Odette.Ramos@baltimorecity.gov>; Leva, Anthony F (City Council) <anthony.leva@baltimorecity.gov>
Cc: Brandon M Scott <brandonm.scott@baltimorecity.gov>; Themelis, Nina <Nina.Themelis@baltimorecity.gov>; Rodriguez, Catalina (Mayor's Office) <Catalina.Rodriguez-Lima@baltimorecity.gov>

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Baltimore City IT Network Systems.

Reminder: DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe. Report any suspicious activities using the Report Phishing Email Button, or by emailing to Phishing@baltimorecity.gov

Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council;

On behalf of TAMOJA Foundation, Inc., I write to offer our support for Bill 23-0438, which seeks to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs within the Baltimore City Mayor's Office. Our mailing address is 4709 Harford Rd #58, Baltimore, MD 21214 with organization staff from across Baltimore City.

TAMOJA Foundation was founded by a multidisciplinary group of advocates who saw a need for prevention of gender-based violence among youth in our community. We believe in a world without violence. Our mission is to reduce gender-based violence through culturally appropriate awareness, education, and promotion of social and economic independence amongst and in partnership with Latinx immigrant-origin youth and allies.

The almost 50,000 individuals in Baltimore City who are immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees need representation and consideration in the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) provides essential advocacy, technical assistance, and community support for New Americans as well as the organizations that serve them. MIMA will best be able to support immigrant communities for years to come if they are codified as a required part of the Mayor's Office. No matter the political climate, immigrants living in Baltimore City must be guaranteed representation from their city officials.

There is no advocacy without representation. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs brings light to communities often underrepresented in the decision-making processes of legislation and programs. A thriving community is one that includes everyone, and Baltimore is more diverse now than ever in its history. MIMA is also a bridge to connect agencies allowing all citizens, regardless of origin, race, and ethnicity to be represented. As an immigrant, I would like to highlight the importance of MIMA in my career as a public health practitioner, researcher and community advocate. I do not feel that I am alone in representing and advocating for our communities in various settings, connecting organizations and communities.

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is essential in our mission to serve Baltimore City residents. We provide full support to Bill 23-0438 and urge you to consider passing Bill 23-0438 to codify MIMA. Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Sincerely,

Monica Guerrero Vazquez, (she,her,ella)
President and CEO

TAMOJA Foundation

for a world without gender-based and intimate partner violence

Web: www.tamoja.org

Email: tamojafoundation@gmail.com, hello@tamoja.org

Phone: 443-447-4404

April 9, 2024

Chairman Mark Conway
Public Safety and Government Operations Committee
Baltimore City Council
Room 400 City Hall
100 N. Holiday St.
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Chair Conway and members of the Committee:

My name is Agatha So, and I live in Hampden. I have lived in Baltimore City for nearly 15 years. I urge you to favorably approve **Bill 23-0438**, which would formally establish the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA). MIMA has played integral role in promoting the wellbeing of Baltimore's growing immigrant and refugee communities.

I first arrived in Baltimore in 2010, less than one year after returning to the United States from a 3-year stay in Beijing, China. During my time in China, I had opportunities to visit different corners of the country and become proficient in Mandarin/Chinese. I also learned that in China, despite all my best efforts to "try and fit in", I would always be an immigrant.

That's not necessarily a new experience for me, as I am a daughter of two immigrants to the United States. My mother immigrated to this country from Poland in the late 1960s with her family, and when she arrived, she did not speak a word of English. My father, on the other hand, immigrated from the Philippines, where he learned English in school. By the time he arrived in the United States 1960s, he spoke and wrote as well as a native English speaker and writer.

My first decade in Baltimore city has been shaped by many encounters with, friendships and work with immigrant families and communities. My first experience was while I was studying towards a master's degree in social work. As a social work student, I was assigned a field placement with an organization. I was first placed with the Southeast Community Development Corporation (Southeast CDC), a non-profit community-based organization based in Highlandtown, a neighborhood with a growing population of Latino immigrant families. I worked as a community outreach coordinator, canvassing and organizing projects planned and implemented by neighbors who spoke English and Spanish. It was through that experience, and my work in southeast Baltimore neighborhoods for the next four years, that opened my eyes to the troubling inequity in access to resources, jobs, and

opportunity faced by immigrant families. This inequity was especially stake for individuals and families who faced a language barrier because they didn't speak English well or at all.

The inequity was so evident that while I was coordinating and organizing projects, I also tried to connect Spanish-speaking neighbors with information, opportunities, and resources. I shared any materials available in-language or provided an explanation in-language. While I was persistent and consistent in my communication, the gap in available resources, materials and information in-language was a major barrier for fully welcoming and integrating these families into the fabric of the neighborhood.

But the glaring gaps in access to services and opportunities were not limited to families in the neighborhood. Small businesses started by immigrants on Highlandtown's main street, Eastern Avenue, have been growing. For these businesses, not having access to information and services in their language posed barriers for their success, and at times, came with a price. I recall the story of an owner of a Chinese restaurant on Eastern Ave, who I often saw at least once a week. At that time, I was proficient in Mandarin, so I formed relationships with businesses like these along Eastern Avenue. I was shocked to discover that the owner had been making regular payments of hundreds of dollars, but the owner did not know what they were for. I raised this issue with Southeast CDC's main street manager who explained that this business owner was paying a fine for not meeting a requirement from the City's Health Department but was not informed of the reason for the fine. I discovered this owner was likely paying up to thousands a year in fines. I contacted Catalina Rodriguez-Lima, who is now the Director of MIMA. She immediately responded with a solution, which was to ensure the owner received information in Mandarin about the fine and how to resolve the issue! I later checked back in with the owner, who showed me the installation of a new system in the kitchen that met with the requirements.

As Baltimore city's foreign-born population continues to grow, it is incumbent on the city to ensure that immigrant and refugee communities are supported and set up to succeed. I urge you to favorably approve **Bill 23-0438**, to ensure that MIMA can continue its critical mission.

Sincerely,

Agatha So

1022 West 38th St

Baltimore, MD 21211

April 8, 2024

Councilmember Mark Conway
Chair, Public Safety & Government Operations Committee
Baltimore City Council
100 N. Holliday St, 4th Fl
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: Support for Council Bill 23-0438

Chair Conway, Councilmember Ramos, & Members of the Committee:

I am a professor of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, specializing in infectious diseases, HIV/AIDs, tuberculosis, and migrant health. I also co-founded Centro SOL, which aims to improve quality, outcomes, and access to care for Latinxs at Johns Hopkins, and co-direct the Center for Community and Global Health Equity in Infectious Diseases (CCGHE-ID). In these roles, I have had the opportunity to work with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA). My experience leads me to support the establishment of MIMA as a permanent fixture of Baltimore City government.

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected the Latinx community. In 2020, Hopkins brought together diverse stakeholders to identify urgent community needs and develop timely solutions. We established the Latinx Anchor Strategy, which provided a platform to share information and promote equitable access to resources for patients with limited English proficiency. The Strategy leveraged institutional, community, and government resources and expertise, which improved access to COVID-19 testing, care, and vaccinations for low-income immigrants. Through the Pandemic Anchor Strategy, Hopkins leaders coordinated with the School System, the City & State Health Departments and other agencies like MIMA to provide additional bilingual support for Spanish-speaking patients. I found the collaboration with MIMA to be critical to dispelling misinformation, engendering trust, and providing crucial social services for underserved Latinxs.

The Rawlings-Blake Administration created MIMA in 2014 in response to recommendations from community stakeholders. The Office continues to work effectively with over 100 immigrant-serving advocacy organizations. MIMA helps immigrants and refugees integrate successfully. Local government should advocate on behalf of New Americans and ensure that all neighbors can live, work, and raise their families with peace and dignity. By passing Bill 23-0438, the City Council would ensure that no future Mayoral Administration could unilaterally dissolve MIMA in the future, while simultaneously underlining the City's commitment to the immigrant community.

I ask that the Committee recommend Bill 23-0438 favorably to the Baltimore City Council to ensure that Baltimore City government represents and serves immigrant residents and communities.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kathleen Raquel Page, M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

CC: Members of the Baltimore City Council Public Safety & Government Operations Committee
Jennifer J. Mielke, Director, Baltimore City Government & Community Affairs, JHUM
Justin Lane, Assistant Director, Baltimore City Government & Community Affairs, JHUM



From: The Latino Economic Development Center
Date: 10 April, 2024
Subject: Support for Bill 23-0438: MIMA Codification
Name: Julia Sarmiento – Tenant Services Program Manager

Dear Councilmembers,

On behalf of The Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC), I'm here to support Bill 23-0438, which seeks to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs within the Baltimore City Mayor's Office. We are located in District 1 with organization staff from across Baltimore City.

LEDC is a Community Based Organization with more than 33 years of history serving the Metropolitan Area region, including Baltimore City since 2015, and Puerto Rico Since 2019. LEDC is a HUD approved Housing Counseling Agency and US Treasury certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). Our mission is to serve as a catalyst that drives the economic and social advancement of low-to moderate-income Latinos and other underserved communities by equipping them with the skills and tools to achieve financial independence, acquire personal and business assets, create generational wealth and become leaders in their communities.

The almost 50,000 individuals in Baltimore City who are immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees need representation and consideration in the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA) provides essential advocacy, technical assistance, and community support for New Americans as well as the organizations that serve them. MIMA will best be able to support immigrant communities for years to come if they are codified as a required part of the Mayor's Office. Our clients, including immigrants in Baltimore, should be guaranteed representation from their city officials.

[describe how MIMA's codification would support your work]

MIMA has aided LEDC in our mission to serve Baltimore City residents. We provide full support to Bill 23-0438 and urge you to consider passing Bill 23-0438 to codify MIMA.

Please feel free to contact me if additional information would be helpful.

Best,
Julia Sarmiento
Tenant Services Senior Program Director
The Latino Economic Development Center

DC: 1401 Columbia Road NW, Unit C-1 Washington, DC 20009 | (202) 540-7400

MD: 12520 Prosperity Drive, Suite 200 Silver Spring, MD 20904 | (202) 540-7400

3500 Boston Street, Suite 227, Baltimore MD 21224 | (202) 540-7400

VA: 2300 Wilson Blvd. Suite 719, Arlington VA 22201 | (202) 540-7400

PR: Calle Ramón Emeterio Betances #345, Suite 108, Mayagüez, PR 00680 | (939) 545-2817

www.ledcmetro.org | [@ledcmetro](https://twitter.com/ledcmetro)



DC: 1401 Columbia Road NW, Unit C-1 Washington, DC 20009 | (202) 540-7400
MD: 12520 Prosperity Drive, Suite 200 Silver Spring, MD 20904 | (202) 540-7400
3500 Boston Street, Suite 227, Baltimore MD 21224 | (202) 540-7400
VA: 2300 Wilson Blvd. Suite 719, Arlington VA 22201 | (202) 540-7400
PR: Calle Ramón Emeterio Betances #345, Suite 108, Mayagüez, PR 00680 | (939) 545-2817

www.ledcmetro.org | [@ledcmetro](#)



Good afternoon,

My name is Lucia Islas, and I live in District. I support Bill 23-0438 to codify the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, which is referred to as MIMA.

As a 17-year resident of Baltimore City and a community leader, I live and work alongside fellow immigrants and refugees of many different immigration statuses. We have overcome many barriers to create a home here in Baltimore and contribute to our community in many ways.

With the support of MIMA, grassroots groups have organized community clean-ups, organized resource fairs, and supported the census efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. Community leaders' partner with MIMA to help better inform the Latino community about the spread and prevention of COVID-19. We supported COVID testing sites and, eventually, vaccination sites. We have done all these things alongside trusted non-profit partners because MIMA has uplifted their work and built partnerships so their work is better funded.

MIMA has worked alongside these organizations and grassroots groups to support immigrant families at times of great crisis, like the pandemic, the terrible fire in Highlandtown, or, most recently, the fall of the Key Bridge.

MIMA is not just here during emergencies. It works to support emerging immigrant and refugee leaders as they become more civically engaged through the New American Leadership Institute, which I graduated from. MIMA also leads the city's efforts to ensure that all immigrants, regardless of their language ability, can access city services in a culturally competent way.

Again, my name is Lucia Islas, and I live in District. I urge you to favorably approve Bill 23-0438 to the Baltimore City Council to ensure that our immigrant residents and communities continue to be represented in Baltimore City government.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Baltimore, Maryland
April 10, 2024

Dear Chair Conway and members of the Baltimore City Public Safety & Government Operations Committee,

We urge you to favorably approve Bill 23-0438, introduced in October 2023, to solidify the existence of the Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MIMA). MIMA holds an integral role in supporting the successful integration and celebration of immigrants and refugees in Baltimore City. On its best day, local government acts as an advocate for those citizens who are most often left voiceless, ensuring that all our neighbors have the ability to work, gather, worship, and raise their families with peace and dignity. MIMA exemplifies this mission, and Baltimore City would face an extraordinary loss if the office were ever dissolved. It is with this in mind that we ask this Committee to ensure that MIMA is given a permanent place in Baltimore City.

From its inception, MIMA has been an office that was developed by and for our communities. MIMA was established in 2014 as a recommendation from a diverse group of community stakeholders and continues to work with over 100 immigrant-serving organizations and advocates on a regular basis. Through this partnership, MIMA has improved the lives of New Americans in Baltimore City in ways that are diverse in scope and need. From the detailed work of meeting with New Americans one-on-one to assist in their transition to life in Baltimore City, to acting as partner to address health inequities and ensure language access during the COVID-19 pandemic, MIMA worked on behalf of Baltimore City residents. In Baltimore City, MIMA facilitated the Emergency Relief for Immigrant Families (ERIF), which provided close to \$3 million dollars to 2,000 families who would have otherwise not received aid (due to gaps in federal COVID relief funding). When cities across the country were pushed to the breaking point due to COVID-19, MIMA continued to act as a stalwart advocate for Baltimore's immigrant and refugee communities. MIMA's unwavering commitment to Baltimore City and its residents make it an essential part of Baltimore City government.

If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it is that we cannot assume that immigrants and their rights will always be protected in the United States. While MIMA provided exceptional support during the COVID-19 pandemic, we all watched with dread as public charge laws frightened our community members out of utilizing



life-saving services and immigration legislation more fitting of the 1910s than the 2010s came into fruition. We cannot take the protection of New Americans and their rights for granted in Baltimore City. The existence of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs needs to be made permanent.

Like many cities across the United States, Baltimore exists with vibrancy, tenacity, and charm because of its rich history and the continued presence of immigrant residents and communities. **We ask that you approve Bill 23-0438 favorably to the Baltimore City Council**, to ensure that our immigrant residents and communities continue to be represented in Baltimore City government.

Sincerely,

If you are interested in signing on to this letter of support, please fill out the survey:
bit.ly/codifymimasignon

Southeast Community Development Corporation, District 1
Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition, District 11
Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), District 7
Asylee Women Enterprise, District 3
Latino Economic Development Center, District 1
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), District 11
Just Neighbors, District 11
Immigration Outreach Service Center, District 3
CAPSI
Catholic Charities of Baltimore and Catholic Charities Esperanza Center, District 11/12
Global Refuge, District 11
Tamoja Foundation, District 3
Cool Associates LLC
CASA, District 13
Komite Ayiti, inc (KAI), District 2
World Relief Baltimore, District 11
Tahirih Justice Center, District 11
Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at University of MD, District 11
Greater Baybrook Alliance, District 10
University of Maryland Law school Chacon Center for Immigrant Justice, District 11



Adelante Latina
Latino Racial Justice Circle, District 14
Comité Latino de Baltimore, District 1
Salem United Methodist Church, District 1
World Relief Baltimore, District 11
Baltimore Association of Nepalese in America (BANA), District 7
CASH Campaign of Maryland, District 11
The Women's Law Center of Maryland
Intercultural Counseling Connection, District 14
Critical Diaspora Studies Initiative and Major at Johns Hopkins University
MOED
The Straus Foundation
PDRC International, District 2
Baltimore Sister Cities, Inc., District 11
AYNI, LLC - Platicas con Dona Flor, District 5
Johns Hopkins University Inter-Asian Council, District 14
E.M.D. SALES, Inc
FAR-WESTERN NEPALESE SOCIETY- MARYLAND, INC.
Next Generation Language Access , District 1
The Y of Central Maryland Association
Blaq Equity Baltimore, District 1
Latino Economic Development Center, District 1
Barangay Baltimore, District 7

Dr. Gabriela D. Lemus, District 7
Bria Yazic, District 11
Kathleen Page
Valerie Twanmoh, District 11
Monica Guerrero Vazquez
Veronica Cool
Cristina Uribe
Sarah Selim Milad
Garry Bien Aime, District 2
Cathy Brill, District 3
Hieu Truong, District 14
Kevin D. Cleary, District 14
Zachary Shenk, District 11



Susan W. Talbott, District 14
Perla Hernandez, District 2
Laure Pepper Covert, District 11
Ashley Dilonno, District 11
Daniela McDonald, District 12
Valerie Twanmoh, District 11
William Brad Schlegel , District 14
Betsy Krieger, District 6
Adonia Simpson, District 12
Lydia Watts, District 9
Meredith Chaiken, District 12
Gabriela Kahrl, District 11
Zachary Baker-Salmon, District 12
Ricardo Ortiz, District 6
Desi Velazquez
Leonor Blum
Diana Carvajal, District 1
Fernanda Gasparino Rodriguez
Victor Flores, District 1
Susana Barrios, District 14
Lucía Islas, District 1
Julia Chavez, District 7
Felipe Filomeno
Sandra Brushart, District 14
Alphonso Manning
Cassandra Nunez
Cynthia Hypki, District 1
Samuel Ortega, District 11
Melanie Pillaca-Gutierrez, District 12
Emma Bocanegra, District 1
Carey Cabrera, District 14
Adriana Pena, District: 14
Kate Flores, District 14
Carolina Garcia, District 14
Kathleen Callaghan, District 1
Gabriela Molestina, District 12
kul Acharya



Zelma Ortiz, District 8
Robin McKinney, District 11
Katie Curran O'Malley
Joanne Nathans, District 5
Carlos Buri, District 1
Natalia Camargo Londono, District 1
Andrea Rackowski, District 14
Alexandria Liu, District 11
Lauren Diaz, District 11
Nicholas Nguyen, District 13
Shuxian Hua
Xin Wang, District 14
Natalie Wang
Brenda Sierra
David A Rosario, District 1
Tawana Seigler-King
Jan C Rivitz
Daniel Galvez, District 7
Sue Yench, District 14
Solana Postma, District 14
Brian Gerardo, District 5
Bhim B K
John Facelo, District 11
Flor D. Giusti, District 5
Janelle Penney, District 11
Anna Graff, District 13
Ericka Reid
Ama Hayes-Perez , District 13
Maggie Villegas, District 14
Carrie Stockwell
Katie Miller, District 1
Jessie Su
Edwin Pérez
Adriana Pelaez Focil
Omari Jeremiah, District 12
Jemeka Stewart
Michelle N. Mendez, District 7



Jabari Lyles, District 1
Thomas Hosley Bourne IV, District 1
Laurel Ady, District 14
Annie Fullas, District 14
Bret McCabe, District 6
Breanna Patino
Gevene Alarcón , District 1
Cesia Calero, District 13
Bri'Anna Horne, District 10
Catharine Fronk-Giordano, District 14
Nicholas Simões Machado, District 12
John Michael Caseja, District 7
Richard Ortega-Ramirez, District 10
Paul Chandler, District 12
Rhett Reidpath, District 12
Ernest Scalabrin, District 13
Marly cardona moz , District 1