

My name is Elizabeth Keyes, and I am a professor of immigration law at the University of Baltimore, born and raised in Montgomery County and living in Takoma Park these last 20 years. I want to thank the Council for funding immigrant representation, and ask you to please remove the carve-outs currently in place for people with a wide array of criminal convictions.

Our immigration laws are notoriously narrow and unforgiving, but even so paths *are* available for green card holders, for people who would be tortured in their countries of origin, and those paths are available for people on the County's Lists A and B.

Let me paint the picture of who is being denied access to counsel by these carve-outs. With law students, I represented a woman with a green card who had been convicted of abusing a minor. That sounds bad, yes, but the conviction arose from her going to a much-needed job interview, and having to leave her two young sons alone. She found her way to one of the area's few law clinics, and through our representation, we showed the judge that her detention and deportation were the worst thing that could happen to this struggling family for whom mom was the emotional and financial heart. Because she was in the extremely small minority of detainees who could find pro bono counsel, this vibrant, energetic, determined woman is home, and raising two fine young men, instead of them being in foster care at taxpayer expense. The world would not be better for her being deported—which is precisely what would have happened without representation.

Sound bites about being tough on crime may be appealing, but they are simplistic and wrong and unworthy of this Council.

We are not asking for *more* money, just asking that the money the Council has set aside be used for all who, like my former client, have relief available, if they could **get** access to the legal help needed to obtain that relief.

Thank you.