

Marcia Bravo, Testimony in SUPPORT of SB234

Personal Information - State and Local Agencies - Restrictions on Access

January 27, 2021

Good Afternoon Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is Marcia Bravo and I am an immigrant from Nicaragua. I have lived here in the United States for almost 19 years. I was abroad for a while and then I returned. Members of the committee, I am writing to ask for your vote for SB234.

I have never had a pleasant experience with the police and the DMV. When I was living in North Carolina, the police would stop people all the time while driving. They would make people stay in the same place for a long time, sometimes all day, not caring about whether we had children with us or not. Sometimes the children would be crying with hunger and no one could remove them.

When I was living there, I was harassed and racially profiled so much. Sometimes, officers would stand on the same corners that we would travel and just wait for us, so that they could give us a ticket. It was so bad that in just a 6 month timeframe, I managed to get 7 tickets. The targeting was so bad that I left North Carolina.

Now that I am here in Maryland, I am so sad to hear that the MVA is helping ICE (who work with the police to racially target us) by sharing the personal information of drivers. I have personally met so many families who have been deported because of this. In one case, ICE arrived at the gentleman's home to arrest and deport him. He didn't do anything but get a driver's license. Because he ended up getting deported and had no other families in the country, he had to take his US citizen son with him back to Nicaragua. This completely tore their family apart and caused the son to suffer from severe mental illness.

Cases like this is why I believe that it is not fair for MVA to share information with ICE. You have made us believe that getting a driver's license is safe and that our information is private, but we know now that that is not true.

We are the human beings who came to this country escaping from the violence and conflicts of our countries. We came here hoping for something better, but arrived to the fear of basic things like getting a document that allows us to transport and identify ourselves.

By allowing the MVA to share data with ICE, you are aiding in separating families. It is damaging to the parents, but especially damaging for the children. For those reasons, please pass SB234.