

Testimony in support of HB403 - 2020
Immigration Enforcement - Public Schools, Hospitals, and Courthouses – Policies

To: Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair, and members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Linda Rabben
Date: February 11, 2020

I am an associate research professor of anthropology at the University of Maryland. I have lectured and published two books and many articles about migration issues.

I support **House Bill 403**, Immigration Enforcement - Public Schools, Hospitals, and Courthouses – Policies.

For more than two decades I've done research on US immigration policy. I've found that despite some punitive and restrictive laws, the US government has provided for humane treatment of the sojourners among us. For example, the government's sensitive locations policy, which has been in effect for more than 30 years, states that federal immigration authorities will not enter hospitals, schools, cemeteries, houses of worship and other locations where migrants might seek refuge or help.

However, since the Trump administration came to power, ICE and CBP agents have entered sensitive locations and taken migrants into custody, separated them from their families and deported them. Furthermore, the administration could end the sensitive locations policy at any time.

Most recently, a medical doctor in Texas reported that Border Patrol agents entered a hospital where she was treating a seriously ill child, a US citizen, and served deportation papers on her mother, an undocumented migrant. In this way CBP violated a longstanding government policy. (This episode was reported in the *Washington Post* of February 7, 2020.)

We must not allow such human rights violations to happen in Maryland.

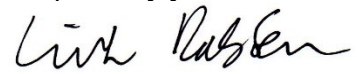
Accordingly, HB403 would direct the Maryland Attorney General to develop guidelines for use by public schools, hospitals and courthouses, to establish policies restricting cooperation with federal immigration authorities, consistent with law, and permit these locations to implement such policies. Such clear policies will increase trust in the law by Maryland's immigrant community, leading to improved education of all children, including citizens, a healthier Maryland population and safe access to justice.

Because of fear of federal immigration authorities, residents in our communities have hesitated to allow their children to participate in school activities or even attend public school. They have, avoided needed healthcare for themselves and their families, and feared to seek justice for themselves or others as witnesses to crimes.

All Maryland residents, regardless of immigration status, should feel safe in school, when seeking medical care, and when participating in our justice system. It is immoral to create such a hostile environment that a woman declines to go to court to obtain a restraining order or testify in a domestic violence case, tolerating an abusive partner rather than risking arrest and deportation by seeking access to Maryland's justice system.

I strongly urge you to reach a favorable report for HB403. It will increase all Maryland residents' trust in official public spaces and make us all safer. Most important, it is the right thing to do.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liza Rabe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.