

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: Reverend Cynthia Lapp  
Date: February 11, 2020

I am writing in support of House Bill 403, Immigration Enforcement - Public Schools, Hospitals, and Courthouses – Policies.

One of the most visible parts of our collective faith at Hyattsville Mennonite Church is hospitality. This includes welcoming strangers and loving our neighbors as ourselves. We do this through participating with the Congregation Action Network and building relationships with our immigrant neighbors, whether or not they are documented. We have learned that many of our immigrant neighbors, even those who are documented, live in fear of immigration authorities.

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. Clear policies like these will increase trust in Maryland's immigrant community, leading to improved education of all children, including citizens, a healthier Maryland population and safe access to justice.

Due to 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, avoid needed healthcare for themselves and their families, and avoided seeking justice for themselves or for 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 force a woman to choose between going to court to obtain a restraining order or testify in a domestic violence case, or tolerate an abusive partner rather than risk arrest and deportation by accessing 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, making us all safer. It is the moral and right thing to do.

Respectfully yours,  
Cynthia Lapp  
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