

January 27, 2021

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB88/HB304
State and Local Government- Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Rabbi Jeremy Kridel

My name is Jeremy Kridel. I am the Rabbi at Machar, The Washington Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism; about 60% of Machar's congregants live in Maryland. I am also a resident of Ellicott City, residing in District 12. I write today in support of SB88/HB304, State and Local Government- Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement.

Coming from the Jewish tradition, I take seriously the Bible's instructions that we honor and not oppress the stranger. The book of Leviticus is clear: "The stranger who lives among you shall be like one of your own citizens, and you shall love them as yourself – for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:34).

Our fellow Marylanders who have come to this state from another country know a different reality. Many Maryland residents know that a seemingly routine question about immigration status can result in arrest, detention, and being handed over into the custody of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. They know that different state agencies have different policies about whether immigration status can be raised during routine interactions. And because of that, they do not seek government services like health care and reporting a crime, even when it is desperately needed, because they fear that any contact with law enforcement or public services means that they may be turned over to federal immigration authorities.

In an emergency, fellow Marylanders have legitimate fears that asking for help comes with the risk that they will not be treated "like one of your own citizens." And this has collateral effects upon public safety: domestic abuse may go unaddressed and violent crime may go unreported, with victims remaining unsafe.

Whenever and however Marylanders may have come to our state, they deserve equal treatment under the law. They deserve, as well, the right to know that when they need their state or local government's help, they will not be profiled or detained because of their citizenship or immigration status.

For these reasons, **I respectfully urge this committee for a favorable report on SB88.**