



Testimony in Support of SB88(HB304) - State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

To: Senator Will Smith, Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Indivisible Howard County, [wordpress@indivisiblehocomd.org](mailto:wordpress@indivisiblehocomd.org)

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Indivisible Howard County, (<https://indivisiblehocomd.org>) requests your support of SB88(Trust Act) which limits the partnership between Maryland's local and state law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including 287g agreements. SB88 also requires the Attorney General to develop guidelines for schools, hospitals and courthouses to establish policies that limit civil immigration enforcement on their premises thus making these facilities safe and accessible to all.

Indivisible Howard County is a grassroots organization focused on building a fairer, more compassionate democracy. It represents over 700 members who encourage you to pass the TRUST ACT and support our immigrant communities in Maryland. These communities have endured an increase in racism, hate crime and xenophobia rhetoric in our society. For years we have let our immigrant neighbors, particularly those of Latinx origin or Muslim faith, to feel isolated, targeted, and alone. It is well documented that many are afraid to call the police because they are unsure whether or not they will be turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). ICE's openly racist policies and tactics such as separating families, caging children, mass detention, forced sterilization, etc. have terrorized our immigrant communities. The practices of ICE and xenophobic rhetoric in our society have fueled hate crime in America causing immigrants to fear both their neighbors and law enforcement. Until ICE is significantly restructured, Maryland police officers should not be complicit with these practices. When local law enforcement inquires about an individual's immigration status, citizenship status, or place of birth or transfers an individual to federal immigration on behalf of ICE, they are complicit with the racist policies of ICE and their credibility and relationship with the entire community is undermined. Your support of this bill will send a message that racism and xenophobia are unacceptable in Maryland and will let immigrants know that they are safe to contact their local police departments.

It is time for the rest of America to stand up for all people, including immigrants. We need a true partnership between local law enforcement and the community to keep our neighborhoods safe. That partnership cannot exist if a sizable portion of the community is afraid to contact the police. This bill will help Maryland police officers earn the trust of the immigrant community by clarifying that they are not complicit in egregious behaviors on behalf of ICE. In the end, this bill will make all of our communities safer and it will ensure that our police officers are not asked to participate in an inhumane system.

Howard County Indivisible urges you to pass SB88 and create a safer, more inclusive Maryland. Thank you for all you do to reach those ends.

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