

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB88

State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement
Matt Hornbeck, Principal, Hampstead Hill Academy
Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 27, 2021

Dear Honorable Chairman Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Matt Hornbeck and I am principal of Hampstead Hill Academy (HHA), a neighborhood public charter school in Baltimore City. I am pleased to provide favorable testimony in support of SB88, commonly known as the Trust Act.

Hampstead Hill Academy, like many other schools, strives to be a safe and nurturing school catering to our growing diverse population of students. As we dedicate ourselves to challenging our students to succeed in a fair, consistent, just and joyful learning environment - our most vulnerable Black and Brown students continue to face barriers to achieving that goal. This has been especially apparent among our Latinx students at HHA. We serve 852 students ages 4-14, a majority of them being Latinx (approximately 42% Latino, 36% White, and 24% Black). We have hundreds of students who are first generation Americans and hundreds who will be first generation college bound when they attend.

Over the past ten years, I have witnessed unspeakable hardship faced by students whose parents or family members were deported as a result of our state's partnership with ICE. Both the emotional, economic, and educational impact that this has on students is immeasurable. We've seen many families detained by ICE and transferred to ICE for domestic issues that should have only resulted in a small fine or family support services being engaged. Instead, parents who provide for their family and have been in the U.S. for years are being deported.

I'm reminded of a brilliant 6th grade student and creative writer who has attended HHA since early elementary school. Three years ago, his father, after dropping him at school, was arrested by ICE. His father's eventual deportation has significantly disrupted his academic learning, as his housing situation has become more and more unstable. Unfortunately, this story is all too common.

Due to this lack of trust, we have members of our community who worry about being questioned by any law enforcement officer, including school police officers even though they do not share information about immigration status. Furthermore, we have parents who may use the threat of contacting the authorities to deal with an issue among students that should be handled by our school based clinicians and counselors.

Senate Bill 88 would take significant strides in repairing trust between enforcement agencies and the immigrant community - and in turn, allow for better educational and health outcomes for students in Baltimore City and across the state. In addition to limiting the state's partnership with

ICE, SB88 would ensure that the Attorney General creates policies to protect immigrants from sensitive locations like schools, courthouses, and hospitals. No parent should fear being separated from their child when dropping them off at school, volunteering, or participating in critical meetings for their children's education. Parent involvement is a crucial part of the success of any school.

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to make a favorable report on SB88.

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