

Testimony for the Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
January 27, 2021

SB 88 - State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement
FAVORABLE

1/19/21

Dear Senator Will Smith, and both chairs of the Judiciary Committee: Luke Clippinger and Vanessa Atterbeary,

My name is Danielle L Contreras US Citizen and small business owner in Elkton, MD. I own a Hispanic grocery store and a restaurant. My restaurant has been open for 3 years now and my grocery store has been open for 15 years now. I have been an active member in the Hispanic community in Elkton and the surrounding areas for over 15 years as my husband is from Mexico and we have been married for 24 years now. My normal day is not the grocery store or the restaurant, it is translating and helping customers with tax letters, legal issues, MVA forms, immigration issues, school forms, church forms, notary letters, and even medical issues. As I speak both languages many of my customers trust me to help translate and fill out forms for many different issues. I do not only help Hispanic (Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, etc...) I have helped people from Jamaica, Italia, Turkey, even some people that are US citizens that just do not know their way around forms or applications.

When Cecil County entered the 287g contract with USCIS and added immigration to their job duties fear came across the county. Some people have moved out of the area in fear of what could happen. I personally know of a few men who have been picked up with this new law. One had a DUI and was processed through the Cecil County Detention Center, while in the center he was transferred to Immigration in Frederick MD and has since been deported. He leaves behind his wife and 2 kids. Another, gentleman accepted a niece from who came from central America into his house. A few months after she came the Police knocked on his door and arrested him for not having papers. He was processed through the Cecil Detention Center and then sent to Frederick MD through immigration. He has a wife and 3 kids. Thank God he has been released with a bond and is home now; however, he is in deportation processes at this time. Both cases are things that would have never happened before this new law allowing Cecil County to act as immigration officers.

This new law is not helping the county, it is hurting us. Many of my customers do not go to the courts now in fear of being processed through immigration. I have many people who are victims and would rather not say anything to the police in fear they will be asked if they have papers. One of my customers was in a car accident (not his fault) and he did not call the police, he only took a picture of the other persons information and it turns out that his insurance was expired, and he has no way to contact the person now. Had he called the police they would have taken information and he would have contact information. A friend of my son was threatened by his neighbor that they are going to contact the police and turn them into immigration because they are Hispanic. The son has DACA; however, the parents do not. They are great additions to our economy and have a genuinely nice house in Patriots Glenn. It is a shame they must live in this kind of community that does not protect all members.

Due to this policies, Hispanic and other immigrants are living in fear every day. I can not imagine living in this kind of fear daily or feeling that you are not equal to others. Personally, I feel 287g is just a law that allows for Hispanic racism. The police have the right to ask my kids, husband, and friends if they have legal status in the USA just because of their complexion. My 2nd daughter goes to school in Frederick MD and I have told her not to go into the city due to the extreme Hispanic racism they have caused due to the police singling out Hispanics. She was born in the USA; however, she looks very Hispanic as she has very olive skin tone with long black hair and dark eyes. It is not fair to her, however; I would prefer to protect her from this stereotyping that has become a racial discrimination issue in our area.

If you need to contact me feel free to write me at 143 Continental Dr. Elkton, MD 21921. Or you can call me on my cell at 410-920-6828 or home 410-398-9660. I thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Danielle Contreras