

Committing to Immigrant-Inclusive Policies Supports Safe, Just, and Thriving Communities

Position Statement in Support of Senate Bill 88

Given before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

For years, Maryland has recognized the benefits of welcoming immigrants into its communities. It is beneficial to all Marylanders when immigrants are able to enroll their children in school, seek necessary medical treatment, and participate in our justice system without fear of unjust discrimination, detention, or separation from their families, regardless of their legal status.

In addition, jailing suspected undocumented immigrants at the request of federal officials costs Maryland and its localities hundreds of thousands of dollars each year, using scarce state and local resources that could be better spent on more pressing needs. The detentions, which are not required by federal law and overwhelmingly target non-violent offenders, also erode trust in local law enforcement within immigrant communities, which can hamper the prevention and investigation of more serious crimes.

The Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 88 because it would support safe communities and increase trust in public institutions while ensuring public resources are used more effectively.

Adopting policies that afford all residents, regardless of their immigration status, the opportunity to thrive helps Maryland foster community well-being and strengthen its economy. Maryland is home to about 250,000 residents who are undocumented,ⁱ and these individuals make significant contributions to our communities and economy. More than half of Maryland's undocumented residents have lived in the U.S. for more than 10 years and about one in six have lived here for 20 years or more.ⁱⁱ Immigrants make up nearly 20 percent of Maryland's workforce, and immigrant-led households pay \$3 billion a year in state and local taxes.ⁱⁱⁱ It is critical that Maryland remain a welcoming place for immigrants to build their lives.

Fear of immigration enforcement can make it harder for Marylanders born outside the United States to participate fully in their communities, ultimately making all of us worse off:

- No parent should have to fear being separated from their family when they are taking a child to school, attending a parent-teacher meeting, or participating in the PTA. Schools with a high level of parental involvement tend to have more satisfied teachers, higher-quality programs, and better reputations in their communities,^{iv} so removing barriers that prevent some parents from fully participating in their child's education is beneficial to all students.

- Fear of immigration enforcement in courts can prevent immigrants from participating in our criminal justice system. An immigrant who is the victim of a crime or witnesses one is less likely to come forward if they don't trust law enforcement or the court system. As some jurisdictions in Maryland struggle with high crime rates, it benefits all Marylanders to ensure that immigrants don't fear discrimination or detention when they report a crime or are summoned to court.

Ending police participation in federal immigration enforcement statewide would also strengthen communities and reduce unnecessary costs. While some circumstances have changed since then, a 2014 analysis by the Maryland Center on Economic Policy found that enforcing federal immigration detainers cost Maryland at least \$1 million between 2010 and 2013^v. This does not account for the full social and economic costs, as those being detained miss work, lose pay, and are deprived of seeing their families. A Colorado study found that state lost millions in tax revenue and economic activity as a result of honoring federal immigration detainer requests^{vi}.

Maryland has a long history as a place where immigrants and refugees find safety, community, and opportunity. This history has helped to create the economically and culturally thriving community we have in Maryland today. Passing Senate Bill 88 would build on and strengthen our state's long legacy as a welcoming place and support safe communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee make a favorable report on Senate Bill 88.

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 88

Bill Summary

Senate Bill 88 would:

- End police partnership with ICE and other federal agencies, including 287g programs.
- Protect immigrants from ICE in sensitive locations such as schools, courthouses and hospitals.
- Protect immigrants against coercion to ensure that community members can interact with police without fear of harassment.
- Stop law enforcement agencies from inquiring to, transferring to, notifying for or detaining for ICE.

Background

Maryland is home to about 250,000 residents who are undocumented, and these individuals make significant contributions to our communities and economy. More than half of Maryland's undocumented residents have lived in the U.S. for more than 10 years and about one in six have lived here for 20 years or more. Immigrants make up nearly 20 percent of Maryland's workforce, and immigrant-led households pay \$3 billion a year in state and local taxes.

Maryland jurisdictions also spend hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to support detention of people who are suspected to be in violation of federal immigration laws. Research shows that these policies have significant social and economic costs, on top of the direct expenses.

Equity Implications

- Senate Bill 88 would remove barriers that keep many immigrants from accessing public facilities and services, regardless of their immigration status, because of fear of immigration enforcement.
- Senate Bill 88 would protect immigrants' safe access to schools, health care, and courts, which could have a range of long-term benefits – everything from improved educational outcomes for children whose parents are more involved in the school to being able to prevent an eviction because the family could safely participate in court proceedings.

Impact

Senate Bill 88 would likely **improve racial and economic equity in Maryland.**

ⁱ Pew Research Center. "Mexicans decline to less than half the U.S. unauthorized immigrant population for the first time." June 12, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/12/us-unauthorized-immigrant-population-2017/>

ⁱⁱ Center for Migration Studies. "State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates." <http://data.cmsny.org/state.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ American Immigration Council. "Immigrants in Maryland." 2017.

https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/immigrants_in_maryland.pdf

^{iv} Education.com. "The Benefits of Parent Involvement: What Research Has to Say." 2017.

<https://tx50000103.schoolwires.net/cms/lib/TX50000103/Centricity/Domain/21/Parent%20Liaison/benefits-parent-involvement-research.pdf>

^v This estimate is based on data provided to the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request. The full report, included a description of the methodology employed, is available here: <http://www.mdeconomy.org/maryland-pays-high-costs-for-federal-immigration-enforcement/>

^{vi} Stiffler, Chris. "The High Cost of Immigration Enforcement in Colorado," The Color Fiscal Institute, March 26, 2013, http://www.coloradofiscal.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2013-3-29_Community-Trust-Report.pdf