



SB 088/HB 304 – SUPPORT

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State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

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Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

The Maryland Chapter of Doctors for Camp Closure strongly supports SB 088/HB 304, the State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement Act (the Maryland Trust Act). We are part of the national Doctors for Camp Closure organization which is a non-partisan organization of over 2,200 physicians and health care professionals from all specialties who oppose inhumane detention of migrants and refugees who are attempting to enter the United States of America.

As health care professionals we know all too well the importance of our patients coming into hospitals and clinics for care, both when they are sick and for preventive care to keep them from getting sick.

During this crisis of Covid 19, there is nothing more important than getting timely medical care. This includes getting covid tested so that someone can quarantine and not infect others. This also means getting hospital care soon enough so that one does not die from Covid pneumonia. Delaying this care due to fear of being picked up by an ICE agent will mean the difference between life and death for the covid infected patient as well as his household and co workers.

We do everything in our power to encourage our patients to come in on a regular basis, from having a friendly front desk staff, to having appropriate interpretation services and providing multi specialty care.

It is critical that patients feel safe in their health care settings and not have to fear that ICE agents may enter and detain and deport them.

We know how important preventive care is. Without vaccines people die from preventable diseases like measles and the flu. When people are not screened for diabetes, high blood pressure and colon cancer they then die from those diseases as well as complications like strokes and heart attacks. When women are not provided mammograms or PAP smears they later die from breast and cervical cancer.

Hospitals and health centers routinely treat simple disease like strep throat and ear infections but those infections left untreated can be deadly. Our medical centers have to provide complicated and ongoing care for chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and cancer. Again, without close attention and frequent follow up these conditions are also deadly.

If patients fear that by seeking care they could risk detention and deportation due to ICE agents entering their hospitals and clinics, they will choose the safer path of foregoing their medical care and staying home but then ultimately getting sicker and dying from conditions that could have been prevented or treated.

The Maryland Chapter of Doctors for Camp Closure urges a favorable report on SB 088/HB 304.