

January 25, 2021

Testimony SUPPORTING SB088

Dear members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Emile Feldenzer and I am a resident of District 43 in Baltimore City. I am writing to urge you to SUPPORT SB0088, *State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement*.

Many local jurisdictions in Maryland, including my own, have already put in place policies similar to the Trust Act which prevent collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE. As a state, we have the choice not to be complicit in ICE's crimes against humanity, which include forced sterilization, physical and sexual abuse, deadly medical neglect of people in their custody, and separating young children from their families. When police collaborate with this hideously xenophobic institution, they lose the trust of the public, and also prevent undocumented people from coming forward when they or their loved ones are the victims of violent crimes.

Immigrants are not disposable. They are part of our communities, and our communities are divided and weakened when we allow them to be targeted. I'll never forget the time I did court support for a young man around my age, who was taken into ICE custody for marijuana possession. He stood to be sent back to a country he hadn't set foot in since he was an infant. Two big, burly, armed men loomed over him as he sat there in handcuffs, telling the story of his life--the trauma he faced along with his mother and siblings from his violent alcoholic father, his dream of putting himself through college and getting a business degree. He had dozens of testimonials from character witnesses, a sharp lawyer, and the tiny courtroom packed with family, friends, and people like me, white folks volunteering with Sanctuary Streets. He did not get deported. But no one should have to go through that kind of ordeal, and I have to imagine there have been others like him in similar situations, who didn't have the kind of support he had and didn't win back their freedom. Because they made a mistake, because they committed a victimless "crime". No person deserves that.

ICE is a greater threat to public safety than any of the individuals they have detained could ever hope to be. I hope you will agree that we can't keep allotting precious taxpayer dollars to federal immigration enforcement.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony.

Sincerely,
--Emile

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