

January 21, 2021

Senator Will Smith and Judicial Proceedings
End 287g Program in Maryland
Support the Trust Act (HB 304/SB88)
FAVORABLE

Dear Senator Smith and Committee members:

My name is Mayra R. Castillo and I work in Cecil County, Maryland. I have lived in Delaware and now in Pennsylvania and although I am impressed by the fact that Maryland offers drivers licenses to undocumented immigrants and an opportunity for some undocumented students to continue their education at the College/University level as in-state students, I am writing very concerned about Cecil County's cooperation with ICE in the 287g Program.

In 2020 I was involved in Census canvassing at the Fair Hill Training Center (<http://fairhilltrainingcenter.com/>) where a large majority of their workers is of Hispanic/Latinx background. We received special permission from management to visit the stables and speak to their workers in Spanish to give them information on the Census. In one day, we spoke to over 100 workers and dropped of information for over 150 workers. On a second visit we saw approximately 50 different workers and dropped off information for about 100 workers. While visiting, we were told at some of the stables there anywhere between 15 to 150 workers and there are over 17 stables. We were only able to visit about 10 stables in our two day visit because of their distanced locations.

We were amazed by the care that the workers put into their work. Their work hours are between 5am and about 1pm and some evening work, every day of the week, primarily during the summer and fall months. During winter and spring most of the horses and many of the workers travel to Maryland for the warmer weather. Some horses and workers do stay but not many.

While I spoke to many of the workers, some said they were permanent residents, some had temporary work visas, some were even U.S. citizens, but many who did not want to speak to us we anticipated was due to the fact that they were undocumented. We are aware that Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Delaware have a large number of mixed families of documented and undocumented members, including some DACA beneficiaries. We also have many recent immigrants from Guatemala and Venezuela. At one point I spoke to a worker who asked if it was true that Maryland was reporting private information from the Maryland Department of Transportation to Immigration from those that had applied for a driver license and I had to notify him that as far as I was aware that was not the case.

At that point, in late September, I was just beginning to be aware that Cecil County participated in the 287g Program and I was horrified. I wondered if the Fair Hill workers knew of this but since I was just beginning to learn about this since the program would be in effect in October, many of the workers probably did not know yet. I knew if they found out that the Cecil County police participates with Immigration/ICE in 287g they would panic and probably stop going to Fair Hill. In past years while I lived in Delaware there were issues where the local police often profiled black and brown drivers and many more black and brown drivers paid higher penalties for small infractions like going 5 miles over local limits, running yellow lights, or having broken lights on their cars. Local black and brown communities often hate and fear police when they

know they are being profiled and they refuse to corroborate with local police when they feel threatened and unsafe. They also often don't report violence in the home or in the community due to fear of the police and fear of being deported for reporting such crimes.

Cecil County's participation in 287g has that potential in Cecil County, to create fear and hostility between the police and the black/brown communities. We are grateful that Trump is no longer President, and that Biden has indicated he will help so that those that qualify to receive permanent residency can receive it, rather than to continue to put applications on hold or to deport and separate families outright.

I am asking that you please continue to fight so that 287g is removed from Cecil County so that our communities can continue to feel safe and protected and that they can continue to go to work. Many of the families that work in Fair Hill come from Delaware and Pennsylvania and if there were to be stopped in Maryland as they come to work, they could face being sent to immigration proceedings instead of making it back home to their families.

We know Cecil County has a history of discrimination and racism against communities of color and a history of some white individuals participating in KKK, White Supremacist Organizations and many were Trump supporters, and some were even at last week's insurrection at The Nation's Capital.

We need to stop 287g because we know it's another tactic to scare black and brown communities that already live in fear and in hiding because they don't want to be separated from their families by being deported or incarcerated in a cold cell while they await immigration proceedings.

We need to pass HB 304/SB88 (the Trust Act) to stop law enforcement from cooperating with ICE and to send a clear message that immigrants are safe here, and that their rights are protected.

For years now, Marylanders from across the state have shared with the General Assembly why we should not continue to partner with ICE. We need your commitment right now to get the Trust Act over the finish line, I'm looking forward to your support.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns on this issue and I thank you for your time and effort to support HB 304/SB88. I can be reached at mayrarc@gmail.com

Attentively,

Mayra R. Castillo
Cecil County Employee