

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 88, THE TRUST ACT

Thank you for the opportunity to explain my stand in support of passage of the Trust Act.

I reside in Columbia, MD. I sit on the Executive Committee of the Howard County's Coalition for Immigrant Justice. I am a naturalized U.S. citizen, with varied and extensive insight in immigrant life. I have watched immigrants serving the country, being overproducers in work activities ranging from academic achievements, through trades and as manual laborers. As a nation, we need immigrants and we should ensure that immigrants feel safe and welcome. It has pained me to see honest, hard working people nervously watching over their shoulders in fear of overzealousness and ideological motivation of some, leading to separations of family and destroying economic opportunity.

It is thus with appreciation that I read Senator's Smith draft of SB88. In my opinion, SB88 is good legislation, methodically addressing sensible limitations in: law enforcement approaches, collaboration with federal immigration authorities on civil immigration enforcement, unwarranted denial of benefits, and participation in IGSA's tailored to enforcing federal immigration law. SB88 has a broad focus and it is sensibly limited.

I can imagine some asking 'now that we have a promised new federal approach to immigration issues, is it worth our political capital to support SB88?' In my opinion, the resounding answer is yes, we need SB88. For one, federal changes are slow and not assured. The scope of federal changes may not cover state functions. For another, we in Maryland have no reason to, nor benefit from, participation in civil immigration law, a federal function. For yet another, we have a practical and moral obligation to Maryland fellow residents and we benefit from a community that is allowed to thrive. For still another, immigration is, unfortunately, a divisive issue, with some of us abusing power and, unless prohibited by law, likely to participate in coercion and taking advantage of immigrants. We need clarity that national origin and immigration status are not criteria that should allow different rules in benefits or law enforcement.

Thank you for supporting SB88.

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