

## Testimony in support of **SB88/HB304: Trust Act**

Political Latinx United for Movement and Action in Society (PLUMAS) strongly urges representatives in the Maryland General Assembly to vote YES on SB88/HB304. The past year was a clear demonstration of the poor relationship the police has with many of the communities they are supposed to serve and protect. This was not an isolated incident as protests took place across the country, many of them right here in Maryland. It's imperative that we work to repair the relationship between the police and their communities, and the Maryland Trust Act is a step in that direction.

Police officers are supposed to be figures of safety and protection, but in our current climate they are seen as persecutors, and rightly so. Collaborations with ICE to identify and deport immigrants have tainted the image of police officers and desecrated their credibility as trusted officials. Many people are scared of calling the police for help or assistance because they worry they, their family, their neighbors, or their friends might be targeted instead. Because of this, less crimes get reported, compromising the safety of the communities. The persecution of immigrants does not even guarantee the safety of the community, so it's very confusing to see why resources and efforts are being directed towards such objectives when there are much more glaring issues in our communities.

As a Black immigrant myself, witnessing the manhunt for people who are just seeking out better lives for themselves and their families is quite sickening. It makes me feel like I have a target on my back. As such, even though I'm a law abiding citizen, I make every effort to avoid interaction with police officers as much as possible. This should not be the case. Passing the

Maryland Trust Act would be that first step in fixing this issue. Guaranteeing that people would not be targeted for interacting with the police is sure to increase the safety within these communities. Not only that, the interaction would serve to build a base layer of trust that eroded years ago when people began to look upon immigration with disgust and contempt.

Gerald Norgbe

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