

January 28, 2021

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB234/HB23

Personal Information - State and Local Agencies - Restrictions on Access

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Emily Blank

When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The sojourners who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

– Leviticus 19:33-34

My name is Emily Blank, and I am submitting this testimony in support of SB234/HB23, Personal Information - State and Local Agencies - Restrictions on Access.

I am an economics professor at Howard University in Washington, DC and a lay cantor. I do not know whether I have any students who are undocumented, but I like to think if there were any undocumented Maryland residents among them, they would be able to drive without fear of deportation.

Maryland has granted drivers licenses to undocumented residents with assurances that their information would not be used against them. Yet, the Motor Vehicle Administration's database and records can be and are searched by all federal law enforcement agencies, including ICE. Providing undocumented residents with the ability to obtain licenses (which entails inclusion in these databases) and then allowing them to be therefore targeted by ICE would seem to be cruel-a kind of entrapment. This bill would prohibit ICE from accessing MVA records and conducting warrantless searches for civil immigration enforcement purposes.

Living within the borders of the United States without proper documentation is not a felony, and there is no reason to cause undocumented persons, some of whom have lived in this country for years and made valuable contributions, to live in terror.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB234/HB23.

Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8