

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB304

State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement
House Judiciary Committee

February 5, 2021

Tiffani Ross

Dear Members of the Committee:

My name is Tiffani Ross and I live in Clinton, Maryland in District 27A. I am writing to support The Maryland TRUST Act.

As a resident of Maryland for the last 12 years, I've come to deeply value the diverse communities we share that thrive largely because of the economic and cultural contributions of our immigrant brothers and sisters. As an ESOL (English for Speakers of other Language) Teacher for adult learners I've heard many experiences from my students of uprooting their lives and coming to the US in search of better living conditions for themselves and their families - driven by the promise of freedom and opportunity.

Every class I work side by side with skilled, hard-working, determined immigrants eager to learn English to provide for their families, build businesses and serve their communities. Unfortunately knowledge, work ethic and being a positive contributor to your community doesn't protect undocumented immigrants from being taken advantage of by employers; from being too afraid to report emergencies; or from not seeking medical attention in the midst of a pandemic all because they may be reported to ICE.

Current Maryland laws and Maryland police departments' collaboration with ICE criminalizes undeserving and essential members of our community. It threatens people who are in need of emergency services. It transforms community sanctuaries like our hospital and schools into danger zones. It threatens to rip apart families - the very building blocks of our communities. It erodes the relationship between Maryland law enforcement officers who vow to protect and serve and the people. How can we build strong communities with shattered foundations?

I respectfully ask you Mr. Michael A. Jackson and Ms. Elizabeth G. (Susie) Proctor and the members of this committee to support this very important bill. The TRUST Act preserves the dignity of essential members in our community.

For the reasons outlined above, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB304.

Thank You.
Tiffani Ross