

HB 304 – SUPPORT

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State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee/House Judiciary Committee

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Dear Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing in support of The Trust Act, HB 304. I was born in Maryland and have lived my entire life here. I have worked in Maryland both as an RN and then as a Nurse Practitioner.

As a health care professional, I know all too well the importance of my patients coming into hospitals and clinics for care, both when they are sick and for preventive care to keep them from getting sick.

During this crisis of COVID-19, there is nothing more important than getting timely medical care. This includes getting COVID tested so that someone can quarantine and not infect others. This also means getting hospital care soon enough so that one does not die from COVID pneumonia. Delaying this care due to fear of being picked up by an ICE agent will mean the difference between life and death for the COVID infected patient as well as his household members and co-workers.

It is critical that patients feel safe in their health care settings and not have to fear that ICE agents may enter and detain and deport them. If patients fear that by seeking care they could risk detention and deportation due to ICE agents entering their hospitals and clinics, they will choose the safer path of foregoing their medical care and staying home but then ultimately getting sicker and dying from conditions that could have been prevented or treated.

I also write as someone who has personally visited detainees in detention centers. The people I have visited are hard working folks, with families who rely on them for financial support. They have told me their stories. They are devoted husbands and fathers. Many are also responsible for taking care of elderly parents. When they are picked up by ICE, their families suffer emotionally and financially. Their children do not understand why their parent has suddenly been taken from them. Their families can no longer make ends meet. The suffering is tremendous.

I urge a favorable report on HB 304.