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Judiciary Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 3, 2021

Honorable Chairman Luke Clippinger
Vice-Chair, Vanessa Atterbeary
Members of the Judiciary Committee

Re: HB 304- State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement.

I am pleased to be the sponsor this year for H.B. 304. The Maryland Trust Act is a commonsense measure that **increases the safety of our communities and provides a pathway to justice for our most vulnerable populations**. This bill sets clear boundaries for the State's participation in federal immigration enforcement. Specifically, Trust Act: ends the state's partnership with federal immigration agencies (including 287(g) programs), protects immigrants against coercion, and makes community spaces like schools, hospitals, and courthouses a safe space for our immigrant communities.

Due to the state's law enforcement's interaction with federal immigration agencies, undocumented people are afraid to report crimes. As a result, bystanders of violence don't testify, victims of domestic abuse don't seek peace orders and continue to be abused, murders go unsolved, and children remain unprotected from their abusers. Without the provisions of the Trust Act, victims and witnesses of heinous crimes must choose between speaking out and being separated from their families. Limiting the states' partnership with federal immigration law enforcement will **increase the safety of Marylanders and improve the relationships with state entities**.

Studies show jurisdictions with similar policies have both lower crime rates and stronger economies. A number of local jurisdictions in Maryland, including large portions of District 47(b), enacted TRUST Act. Additionally, states such as Connecticut and California adopted similar policies. This legislation strengthens the justice system overall and sends a powerful message-Maryland will not contribute to the attack and harassment of immigrant communities.

Please join me in increasing the safety of our communities.

I ask the committee to please give a **favorable** report on House Bill 304.

Sincerely,

Wanika B. Fisher

Wanika B. Fisher Esq.

Maryland State Delegate – District 47B