



HB0304 -- Support

State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

Maryland House of Delegates, Judiciary Committee

Chair Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Takoma Park Mobilization supports HB0304, State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement, and urges a favorable committee report.

Takoma Park Mobilization is a grassroots advocacy organization with a network of over 2,500 in and around Takoma Park, Maryland that works to enact local, state, and national policies and laws that ensure equal justice for all, with special attention to the treatment of people of color, immigrants, and other vulnerable individuals in our communities.

HB0304 seeks to maintain community trust in Maryland governmental operations and law enforcement in two ways. The statute would protect and indemnify state and local government officials who do not assist efforts to create registries or databases of individuals that would support exclusion based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or national or ethnic origin. The statute would also, in summary, prohibit cooperation by law enforcement and corrections officials in all elements of federal immigration enforcement and provide guidelines and authority allowing public schools, hospitals, and courthouses to limit immigration enforcement on their premises.

The statute would, in effect, mandate clearly and definitively that Maryland state and local law enforcement, corrections, and civil authorities must accommodate noncitizens and treat all individuals with respect, regardless of immigration status and identity.

This is an important mandate. We recognize that trust and equal protection are foundations for civil society and essential for effective public safety and public administration. Individuals who fear they, family members, or neighbors may be subject to detention, deportation, or discrimination based on immigration status or identify may not seek vital law enforcement assistance, or cooperate with law enforcement, degrading public safety for everyone in our communities. They may fear basic school, medical, and judicial interactions, creating difficulties for them that our state must not allow.

We note with pride that our many Maryland local governments – including the Cities of Takoma, Annapolis, Rockville, and Hyattsville, among others; Montgomery and Prince George’s County; and Baltimore City and County – have established trust policies that both further inclusion and bolster law enforcement by limiting information sharing with federal immigration authorities in routine civil and policing matters. Governments at all levels must act to counter forces that would degrade values and services we cherish and prioritize. Maryland needs uniform protections across the state.

HB0304 is important legislation that would extend, statewide, civil protections for all our neighbors and preserve the trust that underlies effective public safety work. Takoma Park Mobilization urges a favorable committee report and General Assembly enactment.

*Submitted for Takoma Park Mobilization by Seth Grimes, seth.grimes@gmail.com, 301-873-8225
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