

The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chairman
And Members of the Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Annapolis, Maryland

Re: HB 304 – State & Local Gov't. Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement – OPPOSED

HB 304 is a very restrictive and punitive anti-immigration enforcement proposal.

It will prohibit, not just law enforcement, but any unit of state or local government or their agent or employee from inquiring about immigration status or coordinating with federal immigration authorities in any way related to civil immigration enforcement. An individual's immigration status is material when prosecutors, magistrates, or judges are making decisions on whether to release or hold for trial a person charged with a serious crime, or if they are a flight risk or a danger to the community. The bill forbids Federal Immigration officials to have access to persons, here illegally, as they are released from prison thereby forcing the Federal officials to have to take the person into custody in public or in the community. This increases danger to the illegal immigrant, the community and the Federal officials.

HB 304 requires state and local law enforcement and corrections personnel to notify an individual that Federal Immigration officials have made an inquiry or requested information on them and to furnish the individual with a copy of any written request within 48 hours. How much jeopardy are Federal Immigration officers likely to be subject to when their names and perhaps telephone numbers are listed on documents distributed to illegal immigrants who have been arrested, charged with a crime, incarcerated or otherwise in contact with state or local government and law enforcement officials?

Under this legislation, State and local law enforcement & corrections officers, agents and employees will be Indemnified by state taxpayers for any costs of a judgement against them for refusing to provide information on illegals to Federal Immigration officials or conversely, they will be subject to penalties, fines and firing if they cooperate with or are perceived as cooperating with Federal immigration authorities. Maryland taxpayers are also United States Taxpayers and this provision requires Maryland citizens to pay for not obeying Federal law.

HB 304 doesn't allow for sharing of information on persons convicted of serious and harmful crimes including: drug smuggling, drug production or drug selling; embezzlement; theft; firearm smuggling or sales—all of which pose grave danger to citizens and immigrants alike. And member of criminal gangs – who often prey on other immigrants with rape or murder-- do they get a pass too?

The bill's total disrespect and disregard for the safety of Federal immigration officers and immigration law is irresponsible. HB 304 is very destructive to the future of our nation as a country of laws; and to the safety of our citizens in a national emergency where cooperation and trust between levels of government is vital.

Please do not pass HB 304 or any of the anti-immigration enforcement bills before this Committee. Instead, propose positive solutions for an orderly immigration process to members of Congress and the President. It is time to end the hostile rhetoric and actions on all sides for the benefit of all – citizens and immigrants alike.

Please give HB 304 an Unfavorable Report.

Sincerely,
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