



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

(Trust Act)

House Judiciary Committee

SUPPORT

March 3, 2021

Delegate Clippinger and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD) requests your support of HB 304 (Trust Act) which limits the partnership between Maryland's local and state law enforcement agencies and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including 287g agreements. HB 304 also requires the Attorney General to develop guidelines for schools, hospitals and courthouses to establish policies that limit civil immigration enforcement on their premises thus making these facilities safe and accessible to all.

NASW is a national organization of social workers representing over 120,000 social workers. The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living. By passing the TRUST Act you will be creating a more just and humane society in Maryland.

Social workers across the state who work with immigrants, in particular the Latinex community, have been hearing stories from their clients of the fears they face every day. They are afraid to ask for help from any government agency for fear of jeopardizing their immigration case or of being turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). They are often afraid to send their children to school, seek health care, or ask for food from the Food Bank. They have unprecedented rates of depression and anxiety. They face discrimination in employment, housing, and in public. They experience threats from neighbors, co-workers and bosses. They are terrified to call the police for help. We cannot create a just society if a large portion of the community lives in fear. By passing the TRUST Act you can give them the gift of the ability to seek help.

The TRUST Act separates the role of local law enforcement from ICE's inhumane and racist practices. Local law enforcement would no longer ask citizenship or national origin questions or detain or transfer immigrants for ICE. This would enable our local law enforcement agencies to build a partnership with this marginalized community. It is time to stop the culture of incarceration and detention in our nation and create new pathways that meet the needs of our marginalized communities. Social workers will be on the forefront of these efforts. Social workers are trained to be sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and are committed to ending discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice.

NASW-MD urges you to **pass HB 304** and create a safer, more inclusive Maryland. Thank you for all you do to reach those ends.

Daphne McClellan, PhD, MSW
Executive Director, NASW-MD