



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
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HB 304

March 3, 2021

TO: Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Natasha Mehu, Director of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 304 – State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement – The Trust Act

POSITION: Support

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 304.

Immigrant families have been, and continue to be, instrumental to Baltimore City and the entire State of Maryland. From their profound contributions to our community's well-being to their rich impact on our economy, our City is committed to creating a welcoming and equitable place. The immigrant population in Baltimore City has steadily increased over the last two decades. Today, immigrants represent approximately 9% of the City's total population. Unfortunately, Immigration Customs Enforcement's (ICEs) actions have had detrimental effects on our constituency, resulting in the unnecessary arrests and detentions of Baltimorean immigrants and separation of Baltimorean families.

HB304 takes the necessary steps to end police partnership with ICE, create policies around ICE access to sensitive locations, protect immigrants from coercion during interactions with law enforcement, and prohibit law enforcement from inquiring about, transferring to, notifying for, or detaining on behalf of federal immigration enforcement. HB304 aligns with policies that our city has already taken to limit partnership with ICE. Currently, Baltimore City has a policy that delineates how the Police Department will avoid collaboration with ICE on civil immigration matters. "Policy 1021 Immigration Status" specifies that enforcement of immigration law is not within the purview of Baltimore City Police. Additionally, Baltimore City Police officers should never ask a Baltimore City resident about their immigration status, and no officer should make an arrest based on an administrative warrant from ICE. This policy is critical as data shows that collaboration with ICE alienates immigrant communities and drives the rate of crimes reported down, ultimately harming police efforts to keep residents safe.

Every Baltimore resident is safer when all community members feel comfortable working with local law enforcement to report crimes, regardless of nationality or immigration status. Passing HB304 is a necessary step towards fostering greater trust and collaboration with our immigrant communities.

For the reasons outlined above, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB304.

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