



## **Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland**

### **Testimony in Support of HB 304 (SB 88) - State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement**

To: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Jim Caldiero, Co-Chair, Immigration Task Force,  
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Date: March 3, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 304 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 and 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.

As you may know, HB 304 will prevent law enforcement agents from inquiring about immigration status, detaining immigrants on behalf of ICE and prohibiting agents from notifying ICE and transferring individuals to ICE custody. The bill commonly and purposefully called the "Trust" Act will help to instill trust between the police and our immigrant neighbors thus ensuring safer communities for all.

Research shows that counties that do not comply with ICE detainer requests have lower crime rates and stronger economies. A San Diego study showed that sanctuary policies actually can encourage people to report crime. And a 2021 survey showed that 44% of Latinos – regardless of immigration status – were less likely to contact police if they were victims of crime or of our fear that they would be asked about their own or other's immigration status. For undocumented immigrants, it's 70%.

Although ICE promulgated a "sensitive locations" policy in 2011, reports abound of ICE agents ignoring this policy, for example, apprehending undocumented students on their way to school. Immigration policies by U.S. government agencies may change, but until then the government's policies continue to engender fear among our immigrant neighbors. Passage of HB 304 will help to alleviate some of that fear and lead to safer neighborhoods.

Moreover, because of the raging pandemic, I hope that you will consider amending the bill to require the Attorney General to include as sensitive locations all sites where Covid-19 vaccinations will be administered. Fear of getting vaccinated by our immigrant neighbors will prevent Maryland from achieving immunity from this terrible disease.

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My Unitarian Universalist faith calls me to respect the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to promote and affirm justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Removing the fear that is prevalent among some of our neighbors is not only demanded by my faith, but also makes sense. HB 304 will surely help to assuage the fear in our immigrant communities, allow students to take advantage of government-sponsored programs and ensure the public health and safety of all Marylanders.

I urge you to vote in favor of HB 304.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Sources:

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