



Maryland Alliance for
Racial Equity in Education

Testimony in SUPPORT of ---TRUST ACT –HB 304
March 1, 2021

Dear Honorable Chairman Clippinger and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE) is pleased to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 304- State and Local Government – Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement. MAREE is a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system.

According to 2018 data by the American Council on Immigration, 15% of Maryland's residents identified as immigrant and 13% of Marylanders born in the United States had at least one parent who identified as foreign born. Immigrants are an integral part of our economies, schools and communities across the state. However, Maryland continues to have unclear policies and jurisdictions which allow Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) engagement in the state. There is widespread anxiety among immigrant communities about ICE actions. Immigration enforcement—and the threat of such actions—can negatively impact a child's long-term health and development. Children who reside in communities that partner with ICE experience negative educational outcomes and the detention of a child or deportation of a parent puts children at risk of emotional and economic instability. Immigration enforcement and deportation of parents and other family members has serious consequences and extends to entire communities and the country as a whole.

MAREE represents organizations which have witnessed first-hand the impact of intimidation and fear by possible ICE enforcement on the immigrant families we serve. Our programs have worked with families seeking out services to prepare for possible detention and deportation, not applying for much needed benefits and services or hesitantly engaging in schools and programs for fear of being detected and detained because of their status. We clearly know that all of our families have a right to live in our communities, making them more vibrant and strong places to live. Passage of the TRUST Act would only further strengthen our state and make Maryland an inclusive and welcoming place for our all residents.

HB 304 would take significant strides in repairing trust between enforcement agencies and the immigrant community - and in turn, allow for better educational and health outcomes for students across the state. In addition to limiting the state's partnership with ICE, HB304 would ensure that the Attorney General creates policies to protect immigrants from sensitive locations like schools, courthouses, and hospitals. No parent should fear being separated from their child when dropping them off at school, volunteering, or participating in critical meetings for their children's education. Parent involvement is a crucial part of the success of any school.

The experience of detention, even for a relatively brief period of time, has a detrimental effect on the mental and physical health of children. Immigration enforcement actions—and the ever present threat of enforcement action—has traumatized millions of children across the country. **We strongly urge this committee to issue a favorable report on HB 304.**

MAREE Coalition
NAACP State Conference



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