

**Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee
March 3, 2021**

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

FAVORABLE

To Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and Committee members,

My name is Michele Cuseo and I live in Emmitsbug, Maryland, in District 8.. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 304, the Trust Act, to prevent local law enforcement from partnering with ICE, and rebuild relationships between law enforcement and the immigrant community.

As you know, immigrants in Maryland have been targeted by unjust federal immigration enforcement, with the assistance of state and local law enforcement officers who are deputized through the 287(g) program. From the beginning, 287(g) programs have led to countless stories of racial profiling and discrimination, harassment, and illegal stops, arrests, and detainment. The impact of these unjust policies is not just felt by individuals but threatens entire communities. When Maryland families and residents live in fear of interacting with police, it makes everyone unsafe.

For years now, Marylanders from across the state have testified in the General Assembly why our state should not continue to partner with ICE. We need to send a clear message that immigrants are safe and welcome here, and that their Constitutional rights and dignity are protected.

Many local jurisdictions have already passed Trust policies, and now is the time for Maryland to protect immigrants everywhere across our state. With the General Assembly focused on reforming police practices this session, we need to ensure that immigrants are not excluded from these historic reforms.

Now is the time to pass Trust, so that Maryland fully acknowledges the humanity of our fellow immigrant neighbors, and keeps all our communities safe.

I urge a favorable vote on HB 304.

Sincerely,

Michele Cuseo