

HB 0304
Judiciary
SUPPORT

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Testimony in Support of HB0304
State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

I write today as a Frederick County resident and seek to weigh in to support HB0304 for the greater good of my community and the State of Maryland. I am grateful for the work of this Committee - to the members of the House Judiciary Committee who have dedicated hours to the work of police reform and measures to improve public safety, particularly this legislative session. I ask you to spend additional time to pass this legislation for my community, City, County, and State.

HB0304 is needed in part because Frederick County has been unable to rid itself of its existing obsolete federal 287(g) policy, one that poses national security, economic, health and public safety risks to my community.

The rogue policies like this one used in my County conflict with state policy - local government is not the appropriate place for individuals to wage their own wars on the immigrant community. I reject the idea that policing is the place for these political points to be made. As we have witnessed in the conversations to modernize policing, a community in terror is a community that will not engage with law enforcement officials. When our government creates a false "us v. them" narrative, it places all communities at risk.

I'm proud to live within the City of Frederick where we have a professional police force that does not participate in such tactics. Importantly, our City Police Department just published their 2020 statistics and according to them, "crime hit historic lows in 2020 for the City of Frederick, continuing a downward trend the city has experienced for the last decade". Somehow, our City officers have been able to police effectively without participating in this obsolete federal program (further evident by the letter provided from City of Frederick Mayor Michael O'Connor regarding this legislation).

Economically, participation in this program hurts Frederick County. As we look forward to recovery and rebound, communities are judged on livability and increasingly,

inclusion. Our economic competitiveness suffers when we are associated with backwards tactics and the rhetoric used to justify participation in this program. In my role as a business owner, I frequently am engaged in business opportunities that stretch beyond my home county. Frederick County's participation in this program is an embarrassment.

As we emerge from a worldwide pandemic and turn our eyes toward vaccination, we are all focused on health metrics in our communities. Building trust for the vaccine, particularly in black and brown communities who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, should continue to be at the forefront of all policymakers' minds. I implore you to consider how a program such as 287(g), a program inherently designed to deconstruct trust, hurts the work to disseminate the vaccine. If ever there was a time to rid Maryland of this program - the time is now.

Finally, I respectfully ask that we redirect our public safety resources to the methods we know that work. This Committee has spent a lot of time learning and making decisions about data-driven public safety improvements. Respectfully, this program has not been one of those tools we should be using to improve. To improve public safety - and for all of the reasons I cited above - I urge you to vote HB0304 favorably and move this legislation forward.