

March 3, 2021

Debra Band
Potomac, MD 20854

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB304/SB88
State and Local Government- Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Debra Band

My name is Debra Band and I live in Potomac, in District 15. I am providing this testimony in support of HB304/SB88, State and Local Government- Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement.

Every citizen of this country, barring Native Americans, descends from immigrants. My own parents, British and Canadian, were proudly naturalized when I was a few years old.

Jewish text and law repeatedly urge us to be accepting and humane to the “stranger among us;” consider Abraham’s hospitality to the strangers who appeared at his tent, remember how the townspeople of Bethlehem received Ruth and Naomi, and taught Ruth how to support herself by gleaning among the crops.

I am close with a hard-working, church-going Latinx family, who long ago achieved U.S. citizenship, yet still often fear encountering authorities lest they be scooped up for deportation before questions are even asked. They speak of other family members, who are afraid of Census-takers, who avoid as much contact as they can with the government, because of the unfair treatment that, while always a risk, has been epidemic over recent years. No one should ever fear unfair treatment by any branch of the U.S. government.

My degree is in public policy and I know there are a complex set of considerations that are part of your decision making process. However, public policy must fuse ethical concerns with financial responsibility. We must create a trusting environment for immigrants, so that their children may remain in school, so that working-age adults feel secure reaching out for work and adult education, and feel safe contacting authorities when they encounter any kind of legal problem.

Maryland must not cooperate with unfair and damaging federal immigration laws, threatening vulnerable immigrants, denying our whole state the benefit of their energy and potential contributions to our economy. I want to know my friends and neighbors feel safe as they continue to contribute to the Maryland economy and community.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB304/SB88.