

**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 Tarolyn Thrasher and I live in Frederick, Maryland, in District 3A. 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 detention. 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.

As a black woman and leader in my community I can understand the fear that the Latinx community has in my city, and living in fear is no way to live, with fear that your loved one might not come home because of the color of your skin and be threatened with deportation. It's the same fear I have as a black mom when my son goes and hangs out with his friends. The possibility of him not coming home because he's been arrested or killed in the street because he is a young black man. Our Sheriff and his Deputies have displayed racist behaviors in our Latinx community and only three counties in the Maryland Sheriff Department have signed the 287g in which all three counties are majority white Republicans that display racist undertones. The Trust Act will protect the citizens of Frederick and will bring some rest in the Latinx community and they will be able to feel safe in their own community.

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,

Tarolyn Thrasher