

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. We are also working in collaboration with the CASA de Maryland. I am a resident of MD District 43. I am testifying **in support of House Bill 304, the Maryland Trust Act.**



The MD Trust Act will limit the state's cooperation and partnership with ICE and other federal agencies that enforce immigration laws. If passed, the Trust Act will make our communities safer by improving residents' relationships with law enforcement and other state entities.

Trust between communities and law enforcement is essential to public safety. Community members are more likely to engage with law enforcement when they do not fear harassment. And several studies show that jurisdictions with laws like the Trust Act have lower crime rates and stronger economies, and that such policies can actually encourage immigrants to report crimes.

Under the Trust Act, Maryland's criminal justice system will continue to operate normally. In no way does it limit the state's ability to arrest or prosecute individuals it believes committed crime. There is also nothing in the Trust Act that prevents the federal government from enforcing federal immigration law. It will simply halt the use of state resources and Maryland taxpayer dollars toward that end. As you know, the state is under no obligation to assist with federal responsibilities and passing the Trust Act would be sending a clear message that Maryland will not contribute to attacking and targeting immigrants.

The Supreme Court and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals have both found that state and local law enforcement officers do not have the independent authority to arrest based solely on a civil immigration violation. Not only does it infringe on Fourth Amendment rights, but it is quite literally not in their job description. And doing so damages the relationship between communities and law enforcement.

Passing the Trust Act will increase the safety of Marylanders by preventing law enforcement from inquiring about immigration status, detaining people on behalf of ICE, and notifying/transferring individuals to ICE custody. It will also require the state Attorney General to create guidance on ICE enforcement on the premises of hospitals, courthouses, and schools. It is imperative that all people feel safe using these resources as they are essential to enjoying the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is for all these reasons that I urge you to vote in **support of the Maryland Trust Act (House Bill 304).**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Smeton

3140 Ellerslie Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21218

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore