

**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 Cara Netzer and I live in Woodsboro, Maryland, in District 4. 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.

Sometimes I feel that lawmakers don't understand the day-to-day ways that this fear manifests, so I want to encourage you to think about the parts of your day that would be affected if you or a loved one was undocumented. And I want to emphasize that even when people are not directly fearing for their own or their loved ones safety, not being able to trust the police or just having the constant worry about the possibility of loved ones being deported affects so many areas of a person's life. I've had friends miss more than a week of school (college) to help out parents who are trying to become citizens, be unable to visit relatives for years at a time because they wouldn't be able to return home afterwards, and fear that having any police interaction, no matter how minor, could affect undocumented family members. I mention these three instances to highlight how activities that many probably consider mundane, attending school, visiting relatives, and getting pulled over on your way home from work for example, are greatly complicated with the threat of deportation looming over your head. And how it doesn't just affect the person(s) who are undocumented, but all of their family members and loved ones as well. If the Trust Act is passed, it will not fix all of these problems, but it will hopefully lessen the threat people feel when it comes to interacting with the police, having one less way to be separated from loved ones.

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,

**Cara Netzer**