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 David Bass and I live in Frederick Maryland, in District 3. 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.

In my role on the Board of Education, I think deeply about educational equity. We can move toward educational equity when we create equal access to resources. This idea of equal access is essential in all parts of civic life. Access to law enforcement is in fact a public resource, one that is systemically denied to immigrant communities through the chilling effect of 287g. Strong communities are not created through racial profiling and threats of deportation. When local law enforcement partner with ICE, the effects for our students are devastating. Student mental health and student achievement suffer when our local law enforcement threatens to separate families. Our society need not function in this way.

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,

David Bass

Member, Frederick County Board of Education