

**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,

I am Melissa Alvarez and I live in Frederick, Maryland, in congressional district 6. I am writing this testimony in urging the House of Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB304, the Trust Act, to prevent local law enforcement from partnering with ICE and rebuild relationships between law enforcement and the immigrant community.

The immigrant community in Maryland have been targeted by unjust federal immigrant enforcement with the state and local law enforcement officers who are deputized through the 287(g) program. The 287(g) programs have led to countless encounters of racial profiling, discrimination, harassment and illegal stops, arrests and detainment. These unjust policies have impacted communities negatively. Maryland families and residents live in fear of the police.

Many individuals of my community, including close relatives have lived in fear of police. Fear of police is a common reality for communities of color. Passing the Trust Act will relieve the fear instilled in these communities from law enforcement. 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,

Melissa Alvarez