

**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 Flor De Maria Garay 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 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.

**My mother had a scary experience while driving in Frederick County. She was pulled over by a City Police Officer for allegedly missing a stop sign. The City Police Officer inquired about my mother's immigration status. He explicitly asked if she was a U.S. Citizen. She was lucky to be carrying her passport card in her wallet, something she never thought she would have to show to a police officer. The City Police Officer was aggravated that my mother was able to prove her legal status that he almost ripped apart the "warning" that he issued her.**

**What happened to my mother is not uncommon in Frederick County. The anti-immigrant rhetoric by Sheriff Jenkins has exacerbated the pattern and practice by police that deliberately discriminates against immigrants of color. My mother and I attended the 2018 Frederick County Annual Hearing on 287g. My mother had not testified yet, when Sheriff Jenkins explicitly denied that these violations were taking place. My mother was disappointed to hear that Sheriff that is supposed to protect our communities was implying that our experiences with discrimination and racial profiling by police was a lie. My mother, while very scared, walked up to the podium to share her experience and let Sheriff Jenkins know that this is a problem Frederick County.**

**It's been more than 3 years since that public hearing, and we have not seen any change in the way policing takes place in Frederick. If anything, what we have seen is more cases of racial profiling and violations of our civil rights. Sheriff Jenkins cannot longer deny what happened to Sara Medrano nor Roxanna Orellana Santos. An apology from Sheriff**

**Jenkins is not enough to make our communities safer. We need this legislative body to look at this issue with a great sense of urgency.**

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 cannot longer deny that immigrants the right to feel safe and welcome in Maryland, 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,

**Flor De Maria Garay**