



January 20, 2021

Honorable Senator William Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2E
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB88 – State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

Dear Chair William C. Smith, Jr. and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Members:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, I thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 88 entitled State and Local Government - Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement, and your leadership on this issue. CAIR is America's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization. Its mission is to enhance the understanding of Islam, protect civil rights, promote justice, and empower American Muslims.

The United States' immigration detention program, operated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), is the largest of its kind in the world. Individuals in the ICE detention center are deprived of basic liberty, access to a lawyer, and access to loved ones. According to the CATO Institute, 21 people died while in ICE custody in 2020 alone. ICE detention facilities endanger lives and reinforce a system of oppression counter to the democratic principles in our country. ICE has contracts with many local governments that it uses to operate its detention centers, including three here in Maryland in Howard, Frederick and Worcester Counties.

This bill would signal to immigration authorities that our state does not support their inhumane policies. Prohibiting state agencies from enforcing federal immigration laws would inspire trust in law enforcement, help improve public safety for families across Maryland by improving reporting of crimes, , and encourage vulnerable families to apply for social services.

Passing this measure would send a clear message that the State of Maryland chooses to stand on the right side of history. On behalf of CAIR and the communities I serve, I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB88. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Huzzaifa Muhammad
Government Affairs Intern, CAIR Office in Maryland
Council on American-Islamic Relations

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References:

1. Nowrasteh, Alex. *21 People Died in Immigration Detention in 2020*.
<https://www.cato.org/blog/21-people-died-immigration-detention-2020>. Accessed January 22, 2021.