

HBI222_Louise Weissman_FAV
Hearing Date:: February 27, 2025

Louise Weissman
Greenbelt 20770

Testimony on HB#1222
POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Louise Weissman

My name is Louise Weissman. I am a resident of Greenbelt in District 22. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB #1222 - State and Local Agencies - Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law - Restrictions on Access to Information (Maryland Data Privacy Act)

I was born and raised in Boston, MA. I am the daughter and granddaughter of Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants who came to the United States from Eastern Europe before and just after WWI. My family left Poland and Russia as persecution against Jews was rampant and as extended family members already in the U.S. witnessed attempts to pass exclusion acts in the United States that would limit Jewish, Greek, Italians, and Arab migration..

I do not pretend to equate my family's experience with those of our current immigrants. But escaping persecution and/or poverty and dreaming of a better quality of life for our families were and are historic universal themes among immigrants yearning to make the United States their home. We all know the stories of U.S. government support of dictatorships in Central and South America which resulted in people quickly leaving their homelands.

Maryland must say NO to using its local and state resources to collaborate with ICE. During the first Trump Administration we learned this form of enforcement wrecked havoc in our communities. Municipalities that have signed agreements allow local police to act as ICE and those contracts have been repeatedly abused. Ending this program is essential for restoring public trust. And, let's not forget that the program is entirely optional.

In 2018 the Frederick Sheriff's Department and the County were sued by a Latina Frederick resident for racial profiling and wrongful detention. She was stopped by department deputies for a broken tail light that was not damaged at all. They then tried to hold her for ICE in violation of the Fourth Amendment. The case was settled, awarding the resident hundreds in damages, along with a written apology. The Frederick County Sheriff's Office has also harassed, targeted and questioned DACA Recipients for suspected immigration violations as well as Latinx U.S. citizens.

I worked for United We Dream, the largest immigrant youth organization in the country during the first Trump Administration. There were two instances where senior staff who had DACA were held and interrogated at the San Diego and El Paso airports for 5 or more hours until we secured Congressional intervention. So I respectfully urge this committee to return a (favorable/favorable with amendments/unfavorable) report on HB#1222.