



HB1575 Community Trust Act – Correctional Services and Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement - Prohibitions

Position: Favorable

February 25, 2026

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland's education system, **offers favorable testimony in support for HB 1575, the Community Trust Act.**

Public safety depends on trust — the trust that every person, regardless of immigration status, can call for help, report a crime, or interact with local institutions without fear of deportation. When that trust is broken, communities suffer. Witnesses don't come forward. Victims stay silent. Crimes go unsolved. HB 1575 recognizes this fundamental truth and takes decisive action to protect it.

By prohibiting employees and agents of State and local correctional facilities and law enforcement from engaging in immigration enforcement activities — functions that belong to the federal government — this bill draws a clear and necessary line. It allows Maryland's law enforcement to focus on what they were hired to do: keep our communities safe.

We cannot discuss immigration enforcement without naming who is most impacted: Black and Brown communities, Latino families, immigrants of color who have built lives and livelihoods here in Maryland. For these communities, the fear of encountering local police or a correctional officer and being handed over to federal immigration authorities is not abstract — it is a daily, lived reality that shapes every interaction with public institutions.

The Community Trust Act affirms that Maryland's public safety apparatus should serve all residents, not be weaponized against them. This is consistent with our state's longstanding values of equity and inclusion, and it is consistent with what the research tells us: jurisdictions that limit local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement have lower crime rates and stronger community-police relationships.

When immigrant families fear their encounters with local government will trigger deportation proceedings, the consequences ripple far beyond courthouses and jails. Parents stop attending school meetings. Children miss medical appointments. Community members disengage from civic life entirely. HB 1575 helps ensure that Maryland remains a place where all families — including those who are undocumented or have mixed immigration status — can participate fully in public life without fear.

Immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility. When local and state correctional and law enforcement personnel are swept into that work — honoring civil detainer requests that lack judicial warrants, sharing information to facilitate deportations — they potentially expose Maryland to civil liability, undermine the separation of powers, and erode the constitutional rights of residents. HB 1575 provides clear statutory guidance that protects both our communities and our institutions.

The Community Trust Act is a bold, necessary step toward a Maryland where public safety institutions serve everyone. I urge this Committee to move HB 1575 forward favorably. The communities most harmed by unchecked immigration enforcement — communities that have been marginalized, surveilled, and criminalized for far too long — are counting on us to act.

MAREE urges a favorable report on HB1575.

peace & truth,
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