

Fri, Feb 23, 2026

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TESTIMONY ON SB791: Favorable

**Correctional Services and Public Safety–Immigration
Enforcement-Prohibitions (Community Trust Act)**

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Toby Ditz

I am Toby Ditz, a resident of District 40 in Baltimore City. I **support SB791**.

As the grandchild of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe and Russia who fled the pogroms and turmoil unleashed by WWI, I am grateful that our legislature is now speaking with a united voice in defense of the rights of our immigrant community.

My grandparents came here before the gates of US immigration slammed shut in the early 1920s, and they easily gained citizenship. The US abandoned its racist immigration quotas after 1965, but now our new immigrant neighbors are living in an era of massive backlash. Instead of “welcoming the stranger,” President Trump’s aggressive deployment of federal law enforcement officers is so racist, so indiscriminate, and so lawless that it shocks the conscience.

This bill is the logical extension of the ban on 287g agreements (and other agreements with federal immigration agencies) that is soon to become Maryland law. By prohibiting all correctional facilities in our state, *whether or not* they once had an immigration agreement, from cooperating with federal immigration agencies during their ordinary activities, unless required by court order, and by strengthening restrictions on information sharing for local law enforcement as well as correctional facilities, this bill applies the general principle that our state does not allow discrimination against immigrants to our entire criminal justice system.

It also importantly builds in an enforcement mechanism by explicitly affirming that individuals have the right to sue for injunctive relief and damages. Bravo!!

The need to protect our immigrant neighbors is now acute, and the Community Trust Act responds to that need. But we should remind ourselves that the overarching aim of the Trust Act is to ensure that members of our immigrant community do not need to fear that when they come forward to report crimes they will expose themselves or their loved ones to the risk of deportation. It is designed to make ordinary law enforcement more effective by building “trust” with all Marylanders, regardless of immigration status.

The Trust Act protects our immigrant neighbors, *and* it will improve public safety. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on **SB791**.