

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

This testimony is being submitted in collaboration with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore and CASA. I am a resident of **District 46**. I am a community association board member and workforce development professional living in an incredibly diverse and vibrant neighborhood in Southeast Baltimore a block from Eastern Avenue, and the vibrancy, growth, and character of my neighborhood (and city and state) depends on the trust and safety of our immigrant community. **I am testifying in support of SB791, the Community Trust Act.**

Maryland urgently needs this bill to pass, because 23 of Maryland's 24 counties have nothing in place to prevent local correctional officers and facilities from choosing to abet ICE in its lawless acts of mass incarceration and deportation. In 2025, these informal local collaborations were culpable for the transfer of over four times more Marylanders to ICE custody than were transferred through a formal 287(g) program. Most of these Marylanders had no criminal convictions.

The Community Trust Act bars correctional officers/facilities from asking about people's immigration/citizenship status, detaining someone to investigate their status (or based on a request by the federal government), notifying the federal government that a particular person is in custody, or transferring a person to federal custody in the absence of a valid judicial warrant.

The Act does *not* prevent the Federal government from enforcing immigration laws, does *not* hide any information from ICE, and does *not* impede ICE's access to the FBI's National Crime Information Center ("NCIC") database, where anyone booked in a Maryland correctional facility will still have their fingerprints uploaded.

What the Act accomplishes is to draw a line between Maryland law-enforcement officials and federal immigration-enforcement agents. Hence the name: the Act is a step toward restoring community trust in local law enforcement. Without that trust, law enforcement cannot function effectively, and the people of Maryland cannot feel that they are being protected.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB791, the Community Trust Act.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

**John Preston Ford**

**529 S East Ave, Baltimore, MD 21224**