

SB791 – Favorable
Laura Welch for
Third Act Maryland
mayland@thirdact.org
301-928-1624

Testimony on Senate Bill 791 – Favorable
SB791 – Correctional Services and Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement -
Prohibitions (Community Trust Act)

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 25, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Third Act Maryland offers favorable testimony in support of **SB 791 – the Community Trust Act**.

I'm Laura Welch and I serve on the steering committee for Third Act Maryland, which is the state chapter of a national organization mobilizing seniors for climate and democracy. Nationally Third Act has 100,000 members, with 4000+ here in Maryland. We see a well-functioning democracy as essential to halting climate change. One essential way to protect our democracy is to ensure everyone in the country has due process afforded to them.

The Community Trust Act is about drawing a clear line between Maryland law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement. Right now, local jails and police across nearly every Maryland county voluntarily hold and transfer individuals to ICE without a judicial warrant. Many of these individuals have not been convicted of any crime. This informal collaboration turns local agencies into extensions of ICE's deportation machine, undermines the presumption of innocence, and erodes the community trust that keeps all Marylanders safe.

This bill simply requires a judicial warrant before anyone is held for ICE and stops local officers from proactively contacting ICE about people in their custody. A judicial warrant is already required to enter someone's home or a private area of a building. Such a warrant does not prevent the federal government from enforcing immigration laws; it just ensures that Maryland is not doing ICE's job for them.

I live in Takoma Park and my kids attended Blair High School. Blair is celebrated for its diversity, and for being welcoming to new immigrants. I've seen how immigrants enrich our community by starting local businesses, joining the PTA, sponsoring athletic teams, and so many other ways of building community. If one of my neighbors were to end up in jail for any reason, I would want him/her to be afforded due process and be protected from unnecessary ICE action.

For these reasons, Third Act Maryland urges the committee to issue a favorable report on SB791.