

Anita A. anitacecelia9@gmail.com, Written Testimony for SB791 – IN FAVOR

Testimony on Senate Bill 791 – Favorable

SB791 – Correctional Services and Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement - Prohibitions

Community Trust Act
Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 25, 2026

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

My name is Anita Aikins-Afful, and I am a resident of Damascus, Maryland, District 06. I am writing in support of SB791 – the Community Trust Act. This law prohibits Maryland employees, agents of the state, and local correctional facilities from working with immigration enforcement; bans transfers of (potential) detainees to ICE unless a valid judicial warrant is presented; protects sensitive locations, such as schools, hospitals and courthouses; mandates that law enforcement agencies in Maryland adopt these policies or face penalties; and provides Maryland residents with civil action as recourse to sue if this law is violated.

I support HB1575/SB791 because while HB444/SB 245, prohibiting and eliminating 287g agreements between ICE and county police is law, some Maryland law enforcement officials (including those running local jails), are voluntarily collaborating with ICE; they're holding people past their release dates, notifying ICE about individuals in custody, and violating their due process rights, all without a judicial warrant. This is unconstitutional, wastes taxpayer dollars, and erodes trust between residents and law enforcement, making our communities less safe.

Currently we're witnessing ICE operating unlawfully, illegally entering, searching, homes and private spaces, trafficking, and imprisoning persons, and seizing identifying documents, in flagrant disregard of the Constitutional Rights afforded to all persons in the United States. Do not allow ICE/CBP's lawlessness to taint the reputation and honor of our state's law enforcement. Invaluably, Maryland is a diverse environment with residents from multicultural, multilingual backgrounds, who hold a variety of statuses (e.g., naturalized citizen, dual citizen, resident with student/worker VISA, etc.), and play a pivotal role in our churches, local economy, and community at large. We cannot continue to allow their lives, livelihoods, and families to be endangered by local law enforcement operating alongside ICE agents outside our state law.

The bill simply requires issuance of a judicial warrant before anyone is detained for ICE and stops local officers from proactively contacting ICE about people in their custody. It does not prevent the federal government from enforcing immigration laws; instead, it ensures that Maryland is not doing ICE/CBP's job for them. The passage of this law will improve safety, trust, and fairness in Maryland by (1) re-affirming the rights and liberties afforded to all persons by our Constitution; (2) providing an enforcement mechanism for Maryland law, so that no counties or sheriffs operate outside our state law; and (3) confirming that all Maryland residents are legally protected by mandating judicial warrants. Consequently, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB791/HB1575.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Anita A., District 06 voter.