

Dear Delegate Stewart,

I'm writing in support of HB 309.

I went to my youngest's concert a few weeks back, and the multiple languages spoken by the parents in the audience were almost as beautiful as the songs our kiddos sang. Our high school's JROTC marched in the fall, and the colors and religious headgear were a beautiful rainbow. I see what's happening in Minnesota, and it fills me with dread, knowing how much a target our community would be. These are my neighbors. I love and welcome my neighbors, especially our immigrant community.

I moved here for the diversity, not in spite of it. Columbia was built on this dream of all colors, nationalities, religions, and socioeconomic statuses all living side by side. I bought here in Maryland for that dream.

Having been a homeowner here for 12 years, I still believe in that dream.

We want all of our community to feel safe, especially our brown, black, and accented members, who are so afraid of being pulled over, even when here legally, that they're either carrying their documents, copies of their documents, or not going out at all. If these members don't feel safe driving, let alone talking with our police, actual crimes in our communities will go unreported and witnesses will disappear. Distrust of the blue will rise among accented and unaccented people alike.

Being here illegally is a civil matter, not a criminal one.

Our law enforcement should not have anything to do with these echoes of Slave Catchers. Please note that I do not use that term lightly. Slave Catchers were legal in their time too. The Nazis took many of their tricks from us, and this administration is repeating their lines back to us. This is our dark history echoing right now, and we need to face it, together, as the beautiful rainbow that we are.

Please be on the correct side of history, Maryland.

Christine Carey

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