

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

This testimony is being submitted by Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of District 45 and I am testifying in support of HB 1575, 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 assist ICE in its lawless acts of mass incarceration and deportation. In 2025, these informal local collaborations were responsible 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, meaning that law enforcement officers are taking action against people who otherwise would have no reason to be reported to ICE.

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 define and enforce the separation between Maryland law-enforcement officials and federal immigration-enforcement agents. Hence the name, the Community Trust Act - it is a step toward building 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 HB1575, the Community Trust Act.

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gretchen M. Tome

Baltimore, MD 21213

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore