

Testimony on House Bill 1575 – Favorable

HB1575 – Correctional Services and Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement - Prohibitions (Community Trust Act)

House Judiciary Committee

February 23, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Megan Christofield, and I am a resident of Baltimore, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB1575 – the Community Trust Act.

Local jails and law enforcement across Maryland are voluntarily collaborating with ICE, holding people past their release dates and notifying ICE about individuals in custody, all without a judicial warrant. This is unconstitutional, wastes taxpayer dollars, and makes our communities less safe by eroding trust between residents and law enforcement.

Outside of 287(g) agreements that formally deputize local law enforcement as ICE agents, local law enforcement and jails still facilitate immigration arrests by reaching out to ICE directly with information about people who encounter law enforcement. According to ACLU Maryland and We Are CASA, in 2025, over four times more Marylanders – most of whom had no criminal convictions --were transferred to ICE custody through informal local collaboration than through a formal 287(g) program. This practice not only undermines the presumption of innocence, but also harms public safety by eroding trust and discouraging community members from engaging with local law enforcement.

Following the emergency bill to ban 287(g) agreements, the Community Trust Act is a critical next step to: affirm that correctional facilities must have a judicial warrant to detain someone, prolong their detention, or transfer them to ICE; and to stop local officers from proactively contacting ICE about people in their custody.

Maryland's best tool to curb overall ICE arrests of the innocent and to keep more families together is to end all forms of collusion with ICE. Maryland does not have a legal obligation to assist ICE in immigration enforcement, for which DHS is already funded at an unprecedented level. Continued voluntary collaboration is, especially in the context of this Administration's campaign of terror, a reprehensible political choice that wastes Maryland taxpayer dollars and makes our communities less safe.

I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB791/HB1575.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Megan Christofield
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