



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1575 Correctional Services and Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement – Prohibitions (Community Trust Act)

TO: Chair Luke Clippinger and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Washington County NAACP

DATE: February 23, 2026

The Washington County NAACP serves as a cornerstone of advocacy for civil rights and social justice in Western Maryland. Our mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. We represent a diverse constituency, including Black Americans, immigrants of color, and all marginalized residents who seek safety, dignity, and equity in Washington County.

The Washington County NAACP urges a **favorable report on HB 1575**. This legislation is a vital step toward restoring the Community Trust that has been severely eroded in our county. By drawing a clear line between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement, Maryland can ensure that our local resources are used to protect our residents, not to act as an extension of a federal deportation machine.

Our community is currently facing an expansion of federal immigration infrastructure. The recent \$102.4 million purchase of a warehouse on Wright Road in Williamsport for conversion into an ICE processing detention center has intensified the culture of fear through our neighborhoods.

We stand with Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown, who recently filed a lawsuit against the federal government regarding this purchase. As the Attorney General noted, this facility was acquired without transparency, environmental review, or community input. For a warehouse with only four toilets to be slated to hold 1,500 people is not just a land-use issue; it is a human rights crisis.

While we celebrate the state's recent legislative action to end 287(g) agreements, Washington County's history with racism and participation with these agreements, has left deep scars. This culture of collaboration was reaffirmed just this month when our County Commissioners passed a resolution giving "unwavering support" to DHS and ICE, effectively

In Washington County, we are witnessing the effect of local-federal collaboration in real-time:

- **Education:** Children are being kept home from school because parents fear a routine traffic stop could lead to permanent family separation.
- **Faith and Culture:** Attendance at local churches and cultural festivals has plummeted. Our vibrant immigrant communities are being forced into hiding.
- **Presumption of Innocence:** Many individuals currently being detained and transferred to ICE have never been convicted of a crime. Informal collaboration turns our local police into agents of ICE, undermining the fundamental American principle of the presumption of innocence.

HB 1575 provides a necessary framework to stop these abuses. It would:

1. Require a judicial warrant before any individual is held for ICE.
2. Stop local officers from proactively contacting ICE about people in their custody.

3. Reduce racial profiling by removing the incentive for "pretextual stops" based on suspected immigration status.

This bill does **not** prevent the federal government from enforcing immigration laws. It simply ensures that Maryland; and Washington County; does not do ICE's job for them. Our local law enforcement should focus on solving local crimes and building trust, not acting as force multipliers for federal agents.

Ending this collaboration is essential to the NAACP's mission. We cannot achieve social inclusion or accelerate the well-being of persons of color while our neighbors live in fear of a detention center in their own backyard. The lack of immigration attorneys and resources in Washington County makes the protections in HB 1575 even more critical for those who have no legal voice.

For these reasons, the Washington County NAACP respectfully requests a FAVORABLE report on HB 1575.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taj Smith', with a horizontal line above the name.

Taj Smith, President

Washington County NAACP

tajsmith.naACP@gmail.com

PO BOX 2451 Hagerstown, MD 21741

240-347-0397