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Catherine Bergmann, PhD, MPH
Riverdale Park, MD 20737

TESTIMONY ON HBI 575 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Correctional Services and Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement - Prohibitions
(Community Trust Act)

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Catherine Bergmann

My name is Catherine Bergmann. I am a resident of District 22. I am submitting this testimony in support of HBI 575, Correctional Services and Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement - Prohibitions (Community Trust Act.)

My support for immigrant rights is due in part to being the daughter of immigrants who fled Nazi Germany. My Jewish parents grew up under a Nazi government and experienced dangerous antisemitism daily. As Jews, they were removed from public schools, could only see Jewish medical providers, and their places of worship were attacked. Unlike my parents, many of my relatives did not escape; they were taken from their homes and deported to concentration camps in other countries where they were tortured and murdered.

My parents taught me that Nazi atrocities happened because ordinary Germans, along with the rest of the world, allowed them to happen. It is necessary to speak up and fight against authoritarian power. I also learned that Nazi persecutions started with immigrants.

I see parallels between our current federal government and the fascist Germany in which my parents grew up. I have spent my life wondering if it could happen here. I believe it is happening right now to the immigrants in our communities. Immigrants, regardless of documentation, have been brutalized and detained without warrants or probable cause. We cannot allow this to happen in Maryland.

The Community Trust Act would prevent local jails (80% of whose inmates have not been convicted) from becoming a pipeline to ICE. It would stop local law enforcement from facilitating ICE arrests. I would prefer my local police to be fighting crime, not helping ICE.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HBI 575.