

Monday, February 23, 2026



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in 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 de Maryland, an immigration advocacy and assistance organization based in Maryland. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. I am testifying **in support** of **HB1575, the Community Trust Act**.

Maryland urgently needs this bill to pass. At present, 23 of Maryland's 24 counties have nothing in place to prevent local correctional officers and facilities from abetting ICE in its lawless acts of mass terrorization, incarceration, and deportation of Marylanders.

In 2025, these informal local collaborations between our taxpayer funded local police departments and ICE were responsible for the kidnapping and handover 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.** These arrangements are exploited not to keep our communities safe—to the contrary, they are extensions of the Trump administration's racist, xenophobic hate campaign against our immigrant neighbors, friends, and family members.

The Community Trust Act bars correctional officers and facilities from asking about people's immigration/citizenship status, detaining someone solely to investigate their status or based on a request to do so 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 this Act accomplishes is to draw a line that should exist between Maryland's law enforcement officials and federal immigration enforcement agents. Hence the Act's name: it is a crucial step toward restoring community trust in local law enforcement. Without that trust, law enforcement cannot function effectively, and the people of Maryland cannot feel confident 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,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
Baltimore, MD 21209
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore