



Catholics *in* Annapolis

2017

LEGISLATION

The Maryland Law Enforcement Government Trust Act
SB 835

SPONSORS

Senator Ramirez

COMMITTEES

Senate Judicial Proceedings

CONFERENCE POSITION SUPPORT

STAFF CONTACT

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THE “TRUST” ACT

BACKGROUND

Legislation has been introduced in the Maryland General Assembly that would clarify and set parameters for State and local participation in Federal immigration enforcement efforts. The proposed bill, known as the Maryland Law Enforcement Government Trust Act, is similar to legislation considered in 2014 by the General Assembly. The 2014 bill did not make it out of committee, but it managed to raise awareness on this important issue and unified the Catholic community for a renewed effort for this 2017 legislative session. The Maryland Catholic Conference strongly supported the 2014 bill and supports the bill introduced this year.

POSITION STATEMENT

The Catholic Church promotes a unity of faith within the multicultural diversity of the people. Each group finds a home in the Church and shares its language, history and customs. We are called to embrace our Catholic teaching by remembering that Jesus too was an immigrant refugee. We learn in Matthew 2:12-16 that Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to flee from King Herod who was to kill every male child in Bethlehem younger than two years old. Joseph later moved the family back to Nazareth after King Herod died. Here in the United States, the Catholic Church was founded by immigrant communities who have always found a home in their local parish. Today, the Church continues to welcome and embrace

newcomers to our country, and to advocate on their behalf. “Immigration is a human rights test of our generation. It’s also a defining historical moment for America. The meaning of this hour is that we need to renew our country in the image of her founding promises of universal rights rooted in God. Immigration is about more than immigration. It’s about renewing the soul of America.” ~ *Archbishop Gomez, Immigration and the Next America, 2013.*

TALKING POINTS

- The Catholic Church stands in solidarity with immigrants. Based on scriptural and Catholic social teachings, as well as her own experience as an immigrant Church in the U.S., the Catholic Church is compelled to raise her voice on behalf of those who are marginalized.
- The Trust Act defines when local law enforcement takes part in federal immigration enforcement activities. The Act does not alter the criminal justice system from running its normal course, nor does it defend any criminal activity.
- The Act would protect immigrants from being stopped, arrested, searched, or detained solely for investigating whether an immigration violation exists. The Act works to restore trust within the immigrant community and to help individuals feel comfortable enough to reach out to local and state law enforcement for help or to report a crime.
- When state and local police get involved in federal immigration enforcement, it makes residents reluctant to have any relationship with the police- even to report crimes. Communities are not safer when crimes are underreported.