

Testimony on HB 1222 - Favorable with Amendments

HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 25, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, and Members of the Committee,

St. Timothy Catholic Church offers a **favorable with amendment** testimony in support of **HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**.

Our congregation is a diverse population of Anglo, Black and Hispanic parishioners from many countries of origin and we all find common cause in worshipping together. We obey Jesus Christ's command to "love one another" and we serve our neighbors regardless of ethnicity or social status.

At its core, this bill is about upholding Maryland's values—fairness, dignity, and justice for all. The Maryland Values Act affirms that our state should not be in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or funneling state and local resources into a federal deportation agenda. Instead, Maryland should stand firm in its commitment to community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law - by ending 287(g).

The 287(g) program has a well-documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detentions. It diverts local law enforcement from their primary duty of protecting public safety, forcing them to act as immigration agents rather than community protectors. This erodes trust, particularly among immigrant communities, making people less likely to report crimes or seek help when needed. Ending 287(g) ensures Maryland's resources are used to foster public safety—not help the federal deportation agenda.

We have seen first-hand how a community from vastly different backgrounds can find common ground and learn to work together to benefit the entire group.

We have suffered along side our undocumented brothers and sisters as they live in fear of a traffic stop because of a non-working taillight turning into a catastrophic arrest of the primary breadwinner in the family. We have witnessed the subsequent descent into poverty for the rest of the family as their support system is dismantled by the deportation of their parent. As a church, we have supported these families in their distress.

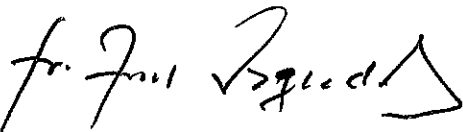
We have seen the unfairness of hard-working, tax-paying non-citizens who will never reap the benefits of Social Security but nonetheless pay into the system in an attempt to obey the law, but now live in fear that the IRS will share their data with ICE and they will be deported as criminals.

The 287(g) program encourages law enforcement to step away from serving the community and turns them into tools for an agenda of punitive rhetoric and grandstanding by a national movement to 'cleanse' the country of anyone who is not white. This is not who we are!

As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, along with CASA, **we support a clean bill that removes the amendments added to the bill in the Judiciary Committee that require notification and transfer to ICE.** The sole purpose of this legislation is to end 287(g) agreements in Maryland, not to create or mandate new forms of collaboration with ICE. Local jurisdictions already have the discretion to engage with ICE if they choose; ending 287(g) agreements does not limit that existing authority. **We strongly support a clean bill that aligns with the original intentions of the legislation - to simply terminate 287(g) agreements in Maryland.** This is what will bring Maryland closer to our values.

St. Timothy Catholic Church urges the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "fr. Juan Vazquez-Rubio". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J" and "R".

Rev. Juan Vazquez-Rubio, Pastor