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Testimony on HB 1222 - Favorable with Amendments

HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

To: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Dr. Anna Rubin, on behalf of Jews United for Justice

I am writing on behalf of Jews United for Justice (JUFJ) to urge you to return a **favorable report, with amendments, on HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**. JUFJ organizes 6,000 Jewish Marylanders and allies from across the state in support of social, racial, and economic justice. JUFJ has worked in past years in coalition with various groups to pass legislation that permitted undocumented immigrants: 1) the right to get a driver's license; 2) access to Medicaid for pregnant people; 3) access to Maryland Health Connection. Further, JUFJ helped organize the successful opposition to Howard County's IGSA agreement which permitted detained immigrants to be held in its county jail.

At its core, HB1222 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. The program has been costly for localities, has historically targeted individuals with little or no criminal history, and has harmed the relationship between police and local communities.

As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, on behalf of JUFJ, I urge the passage of a clean bill that removes the amendments added to the bill in the House Judiciary Committee that require notification and transfer to ICE. These provisions mandate detention and transfer, which courts and the Maryland Attorney General have flagged as likely unconstitutional, exposing local governments to potential liability. Holding individuals past their scheduled release for civil immigration matters violates individuals' constitutional rights, making it unlawful. In addition to being unlawful, delayed release and transfer result in wasted state resources. We strongly support a clean bill that aligns with the original intentions of the legislation to simply terminate 287(g) agreements in Maryland.

On behalf of JUFJ, **I urge the committee to provide a favorable report, with amendments, on HB 1222.**