

Tuesday, March 25, 2025



## Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings 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 HB1222 - the Maryland Values Act with amendments.**

The Maryland Values Act would terminate 287(g) agreements currently active in Cecil, Hartford, and Frederick Counties that allow local law enforcement to check immigration status and detain individuals suspected of being undocumented. These agreements have several proven negative impacts, including increasing ineffective practices like racial profiling, stoking community fear, disrupting and misdirecting local policing priorities, decreasing children's engagement in education, and violating civil rights. These harmful effects often disproportionately impact Latino and Black communities.

The 287(g) agreement active in Frederick County resulted in significant racial profiling and a resulting "chilling effect" in Hispanic communities. Shifting resources to support 287(g) has led to "wrongful detainment, racial profiling and fear of retaliation for speaking out against the program." Due to this agreement, local law enforcement focuses on people with minor criminal histories, steering resources away from targeting violent crime.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found in 2009 and 2010 that 287(g) agreements under the task force model in their state were primarily used to target individuals who "posed no threat to public safety or individuals with no criminal record. Overall, 33% of individuals detained through the 287(g) program were charged with traffic violations; in Gaston County the figure rose to 57%." This illustrates that these agreements

are not an appropriate allocation of public resources, and that they are instead an example of racist policy aiming to terrorize Black and Latino communities.

The last Trump administration massively expanded these harmful programs nationwide despite urban areas citing costs and negative impacts on community relations. The American Immigration Council cites that ICE already has proven ineffective at following federal policies put in place to attempt to curb these negative effects.

**Especially during a state budget crisis in Maryland, this is not policy that we can afford.** The federal government is pushing these agreements because they funnel state resources into federal law enforcement and away from state resources. This is not a financial burden state and local governments can bear or should bear, especially given the current budgetary chaos resulting from the withdrawal of federal funding.

Ending this program is essential for restoring public trust and protecting all Marylanders. Maryland's large immigrant community makes up nearly a third of all Maryland healthcare support workers, a third of the state's building maintenance and groundskeepers, and supports a thriving and diverse small business community. In 2018, **Maryland's immigrant communities contributed \$8 billion in federal and \$4 billion in state taxes, providing \$2 billion in business revenue from entrepreneurship, and added tens of billions to Maryland's economy with their purchasing power.**

Unfortunately, although in its current form half this bill would strengthen protection for our immigrant community, the other half will weaken protections. New amendments added in the House would mandate that law enforcement report individuals convicted of certain crimes to ICE, including any felony, as well as driving under the influence. This overly broad list will help funnel people who are not even dangerous to the community into Trump's deportation machine. It also substantially weakens protections for immigrants that already exist in certain counties. Being convicted of a felony does not in itself make someone deserving of being permanently exiled from their home and family. **We strongly urge the removal of these harmful amendments, and that a bill that fully and solely strengthens protections for immigrants be moved forward.**

We are stronger when our immigrant communities feel safe and supported in our cities and state. Under this current political climate, protections are needed more now than ever.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote in **support of HB1222 - the Maryland Values Act with amendments.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,  
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