

NICOLE A. WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus

Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 27, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 1222

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and the members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams, and I will be testifying in favor of House Bill 1222, also known as **Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**. This bill would prohibit any agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into a certain voluntary immigration enforcement agreement with the federal government. What this bill does not do is state that local law enforcement will not cooperate with any valid warrants or detainer requests that are issued as it relates to individuals who are convicted of a crime of violence, a felony, a DUI, or involved with a criminal organization, aka a gang, here in the State of Maryland.

This legislation comes at a critically important time in the history of our nation and our state. As Marylanders, we are in the backyard of a federal administration that has wasted no time in targeting and uprooting individuals who live in my community and your communities. These individuals left the countries where they were born to come here in search of the American Dream and to create a better life for themselves and their families. The individuals that 287(g) programs target are individuals who go to work, go to school, and raise their children here in Maryland. The 287(g) program is a mechanism through which certain communities are terrorized and creates fear of cooperation with law enforcement. Under these agreements, state and local governments can voluntarily collaborate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to enforce federal immigration laws. In doing so, police officers are deputized to perform immigration-related functions, despite being offered minimal training or guidance to do so.

As of March 24th, 2025, [ICE has reported 153 agreements with law enforcement agencies across the country](#). At the time when the bill was filed, Maryland had three counties

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with active programs: Harford, Cecil, and Frederick. Since this bill was heard in the House Judiciary Committee, three more counties have also had their 287(g) agreements recently approved: Carroll, Washington, and Garrett. Additionally, St. Mary's County currently has a pending 287(g) application. The time to pass HB 1222 is now.

Each of these aforementioned localities is obligated to spend its funds to participate in the program, despite the Department of Homeland Security having one of the largest budgets of any federal agency. ICE provides training, equipment, and oversight, but offers no form of reimbursement for the staff time or overtime incurred by localities. In a budget year where our state is facing a substantial deficit, it makes financial sense to prohibit and sunset 287(g) programs and transfer those savings back to programs that uplift our communities.

Ending 287(g) programs in our state also makes moral sense when we consider its inconsistency with the values we Marylanders hold dear. Our state has a history of protecting immigrant communities, keeping families together, and opposing the anti-immigrant agenda that has taken hold in our federal government. This legislature has historically passed legislation to protect our immigrant neighbors, including the [Maryland Dream Act of 2012](#), the [Dignity Not Detention Act in 2021](#), the [Family Prosperity Act in 2023](#), and the [Healthy Babies Equity Act of 2023](#). Standing up for the most marginalized in our society is part of who we are as Marylanders, and it only makes sense to take this step forward by ending 287(g) programs in our state.

Ending 287(g) programs in our state is not without precedent. Formerly, Anne Arundel County had a contract from 2017 until its termination in 2019. In a [report evaluating the program issued by the County Executive's office](#), they found that the 287(g) program "had no meaningful impact on keeping county residents and visitors safe, nor does it assist in the county's effort to identify and arrest violent criminals." Other states have also passed legislation or issued directives to effectively end 287(g) programs, including California in 2017, New Jersey in 2018, Washington in 2019, Illinois in 2021, and Colorado in 2023. A slew of other states have also chosen not to ever participate in 287(g) programs, including Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming. If others can do it, and continue to maintain safe communities for their residents, so can we.

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This point was proven in my own county and district on February 27th, when [ICE and the FBI apprehended a high-ranking member of the MS-13 international gang in Hyattsville, MD.](#) Prince George's County does not have an active 287(g) agreement, yet ICE was still able to carry out its duties and arrest an individual who was here illegally and had a history of criminal charges, including possession of a firearm, extortion, and terrorist affiliation.

My office has been engaged in constant conversation with key stakeholders who expressed some concerns regarding the language in the bill as it was introduced. The version of the bill that is before you today is the result of tireless work from our colleagues in the House and our partners in the immigration advocacy space.

Think about what it would mean to keep this program in place and subject our neighbors to continue living in fear. 287(g) programs tear apart the fabric of our communities through stigmatization, suspicion, and separation. It is time to bring 287(g) programs to an end and keep Maryland on the right path forward.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 1222.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicole Williams", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.