

Hearing: March 27, 2025

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TESTIMONY ON HB 1222 - POSITION: FAVORABLE with AMENDMENTS
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Jo Shifrin

OPENING: My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of, with amendments, HB 1222 Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act).

As the granddaughter of immigrants, I believe that immigrants are the reason that the United States has always been a strong democracy.

HB 1222 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.

I support a 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.

I 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 shared values.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report, with amendments, on HB 1222.