



March 27, 2025

The Honorable William Smith
Chairman
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairman Smith and other distinguished members of the Committee,

My name is Shari Rendall and I am the Director of State and Local Engagement at the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). FAIR is a non-profit, non-partisan organization of concerned individuals who believe that our immigration laws must be reformed to serve our nation's interests.

FAIR advocates for immigration policies that reduce the harmful impact of illegal immigration on national security, public safety, the economy, jobs, education, healthcare and the environment. Founded in 1979, FAIR has more than three million members and supporters nationwide, including approximately 12,300 in Maryland. On behalf of our members and supporters, I am writing to express FAIR's opposition to House Bill (HB) 1222.

This bill purports to have local officials cooperate with federal immigration officials in limited circumstances, however, this cooperation is completely illusory. The bill language only requires officials to provide immigration officials with notice within 48 hours of release and transfer individuals convicted of certain enumerated crimes to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) only if there is an active detainer request.

This cooperation is an illusion because localities that wish to shield these dangerous criminals in their communities will have the ability to call ICE a minute or two before their release time knowing that ICE will be unable to get to their jails before the criminal aliens are released back into the community to commit further crimes. Moreover, the bill specifically states that localities cannot hold criminal aliens to transfer them to ICE if it exceeds their scheduled release.

Moreover, the bill goes even further by eliminating the 287(g) program for law enforcement officers seeking to remove criminal aliens from their communities. This legislation conflicts with federal law. 8 U.S.C. §1357 (g) states that law enforcement officers may enter into memorandums of understanding with ICE but also that a formal agreement with the federal government is not necessary for any officer or employee of a state or local agency to communicate with the Attorney General regarding the immigration status of any individual, including reporting knowledge that a particular alien is not lawfully present in the United States or to cooperate with the Attorney General in the identification, apprehension, detention, or removal of aliens not lawfully present in the United States.

In its 2022 End-of-Year report (the most recent one available), the Department of Homeland Security highlighted the effectiveness of the state and federal partnerships. State and local law enforcement 287(g) officers encountered 8,842 aliens from 141 countries. Of those encountered, 1,895 were convicted criminals and 4,999 had pending criminal charges. Among the charges and convictions were 1,594 for assault, 1,189 for dangerous drugs, 74 for homicides, and 430 for larceny. Only 160 had criminal charges or convictions for immigration.

Moreover, policies, like HB. 1222 deny ICE critical assistance to enable it to accomplish its statutorily mandated mission to identify and ultimately remove illegal aliens who are currently in state or local custody. ICE has roughly 20,000 employees, but less than half are dedicated to the apprehension and removal of illegal aliens. The cooperation of state and local law enforcement, which number about 900,000 strong, is vital to ferreting out those among us who are here illegally and who wish to cause us harm.

To ensure the safety of our communities, state and local law enforcement and governments should be encouraged—not discouraged—from cooperating with federal immigration authorities. For these reasons, FAIR opposes HB 1222.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my input. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I may be of assistance. I may be reached by email at srendall@fairus.org or by phone at 202- 328-7004.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Rendall". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and larger than the others.

Shari Rendall