



HARFORD COUNTY

House Bill 1411 - Support

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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State and Local Correctional Facilities - Transfer to Federal Authorities - Undocumented Immigrants

Testimony before the House Judiciary Committee

March 10, 2020

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I write today in support of House Bill 1411 which supports public safety through a cooperative relationship with our Federal partners at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am happy to report that the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) and Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) are also in support of HB 1411.

Since late 2016, my Agency has partnered with the Department of Homeland Security to participate in the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) 287(g) Delegation of Authority Program. This participation comes in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between ICE and local agencies that permits correctional deputies, once trained by ICE, to perform certain immigration enforcement functions.

Over the three-year period that we have participated in the 287(g) Program, we have successfully identified and turned over more than 130 individuals who were not residents of the United States and had also committed crimes against our citizens. Returning those who committed crimes against our state back into our community to further victimize

our citizens is certainly not an effective strategy to reduce crime and keep law-abiding citizens safe.

Clearly, I believe the 287(g) Program is in the best interest of public safety and is a solid crime reduction strategy. I also believe it is imperative for jurisdictions who do not participate in the 287(g) Program to work collaboratively with their federal partners to identify and remove individuals who commit serious crimes, are suspected to have gang affiliations or could pose a threat to our national security. Using this collaborative approach with all of our federal partners is one of the reasons crime has decreased in our county by nearly 40% over the last five years.

HB 1411 will ensure detention centers across the State communicate with the DHS to provide them with valuable information about dangerous criminals. This legislation will send a loud and clear message that Maryland is not a Sanctuary State.

As Sheriff of Harford County, and on behalf of the MSA and MCPA, I would respectfully ask the members of the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1411.

Jeffrey R. Gahler
Sheriff