

Testimony on HB 1222 - Favorable with Amendments
HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 27, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to HB1222. **I urge the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.**

The 287g program needs to be ended for many reasons. I live in Frederick County and am ashamed that my County Sheriff participates in the 287g program which is a waste of valuable policing time and resources, destroys trust in the police, creates an unsafe and unwelcoming environment for our neighbors, and ignores the realities of immigrant lives and contributions to our communities.

- Wasteful use of time, money, and resources: While Frederick County Sheriff's officers are busy receiving marginal training on immigration, planning and executing arrests and raids, and wasting detention center resources and time on the added layer of processing immigration status, this total time and resources are unavailable to the community safety policing that should be happening.
- Destruction of trust that results in unreported threats: The Frederick immigrant community has expressed trust in the Frederick City police force which does not participate in 287g. The Frederick City police chief publicly states his appreciation and support for Frederick's immigrant community and has said that his force will not request immigrant status because building trust with the community is the most important foundation for successful policing. As a result, the community feels safe calling the City police and reporting threats, creating policing based on responding to and managing real threats rather than planned raids widely targeting people based on their color.
- Creating an unsafe and unwelcoming environment for our neighbors: Frederick immigrants know they can be pulled over at any time for any reason, as was Sara Medrano in 2018. Walking to work, dropping children off at school bus stops, shopping, enjoying an afternoon outside all become unsafe, frightening activities with the backdrop of being stopped with the explicit threat of detention and deportation. Imagine the life of immigrant children now...unsure if their parents will be there to pick them up at the bus stop or if they will have been detained under 287g.
- The reality of immigrants in the community: The immigration process is long and broken. Immigrants often spend decades going through the steps of the process paying lawyers each year to get to citizenship. During this time, our neighbors are working, running businesses, employing people, contributing to schools and volunteer organizations, and paying taxes. This community does not deserve to be unjustly targeted by poorly trained officers siphoning resources from the real policing work that would keep all of us – including the immigrant community – safe.

Amendment Recommendation: As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, along with CASA, we support a clean 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. We 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 values.

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