



HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

COURAGE HONOR INTEGRITY

Senate Bill 977 – Oppose

State and Local Agencies- Enforcement of Federal Immigration Law-Restrictions on Access to Information

Letter of Opposition to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 19, 2025

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, I am pleased to submit this letter of opposition to Senate Bill 977.

Across our Country, public safety partners are sharing information and working cooperatively to identify and remove dangerous criminals who are in this Country illegally. In Harford County, we have proudly partnered with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for the last 8 years through our 287(g) Agreement, but the language in this Bill would put this beneficial public safety partnership in serious jeopardy.

As written this Bill would prohibit ICE enforcement officers from coming into Maryland jails to serve detainers on dangerous criminal illegal immigrants and removing them from our communities. It would also prevent the three counties that participate in the 287(g) Program; Harford, Cecil and Frederick, from continuing these agreements; due to the provision in the legislation that prohibits agreements for information sharing with federal partners, such as the Department of Homeland Security, for the purpose of immigration enforcement.

If this piece of legislation was to pass; it would essential outlaw a federally established program created under President Clinton that pertains only to correctional facilities and only to those individuals who have already been arrested for a crime. Since being accepted to participate in the 287(g) Program by President Obama, I have been pleased with the partnership we have enjoyed with ICE, and the positive public safety impact it has had here in Harford County for the citizens we serve.

The voters of Maryland spoke clearly in a survey last month when an overwhelming majority (76%) said they wanted illegal immigrants who commit crimes to be identified and deported. I am hopefully that this Committee will support the will of the people and public safety to ensure we have the ability to work cooperatively with all of our federal partners to keep our communities safe.

I would strongly urge an unfavorable report of Senate Bill 977.

Respectfully Offered,

Sheriff Jeffrey R. Gahler

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