

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

House Judiciary Committee

February 27, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to offer a **favorable with amendment** testimony in support of **HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**.

I am a person of faith, and my faith stresses the importance of welcoming the stranger. The United States once had this understanding, too, if you consider the Statue of Liberty. But our current immigration crisis, with its focus on detention and deportation, leads my immigrant friends and neighbors – whether out of status, fully naturalized citizens, or somewhere in between – to live in fear of being intimidated and harassed at a minimum, or worse, faced with unwarranted violence and separated from their families. This is the opposite of our call to welcome the stranger.

At its core, this bill 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.

Amendment Recommendation: I urge the removal of Sections 9-309(A), 9-309(B) and 5-104(5). These provisions mandate detention and transfer, which courts and the Maryland Attorney General have flagged as likely unconstitutional, exposing local governments to potential liability. Holding individuals past their scheduled release for civil immigration matters violates individuals' constitutional rights, making it unlawful. In addition to being unlawful, delayed release and transfer result in wasted state resources. Maryland must uphold due process and disentangle immigration enforcement from the criminal justice system.”

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.

Sincerely,
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