



TALBOT COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



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Re: HB 1222 Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

Position: **Unfavorable – Oppose**

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write to you to request an unfavorable vote for House Bill (HB) 1222 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act) based on my experience ensuring public safety as a 38+ years law enforcement officer in the State of Maryland. This bill would be in direct conflict with Federal law which would prohibit access to federal funds from jurisdictions who are recognized as “sanctuary jurisdictions.” This would negatively impact current programs in place to include (1) grant funding for the police protection of a local jurisdiction who have lost their police force due to funding constraints and (2) 48 hour hold agreements between the Department of Corrections and the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency.

The Town of Trappe has experienced an exponential increase in calls for service and elevated crime to include a murder and an abduction case during the past few years in a typically quiet Eastern Shore town. The Talbot County Sheriff's Office was fortunate to receive grant funding as part of the federal Edward J. Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant to provide financial support for increased law enforcement presence in the town. Since program implementation, it has effectuated a reduction of calls for service and public safety due to enabling proactive policing. My office stands to lose this funding should this bill pass, which would have detrimental consequences for those citizens who reside and/or have businesses in the town.

Additionally, on average, our Department of Corrections house 7-9 illegal immigrants at any given time and the majority of those detained have been convicted of sex crimes most being child sexual abuse. The risk of the release of these individuals without local detainer agreements with the federal ICE can lead to negative consequences for public safety. As we have found a higher recidivism rate for those individuals who commit child sex abuse crimes.

In short, HB1222 would ensure a prohibition of local law enforcement from taking part in federal immigration enforcement and parlays into broader “sanctuary” policies limiting the role and funding opportunities of local authorities. I believe the sponsors of this bill do not intend to cause negative consequences towards Marylanders' public safety, which is why I write to you to express my expert written testimony. I welcome any member of this committee to reach out to those of us in law enforcement with relevant experience in public safety for any assistance in drafting future legislation. Lastly, please OPPOSE HB1222.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sheriff Joseph Gamble