



UPROOTED CHESAPEAKE

Testimony on HB 1222 - Favorable with Amendments 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,

UProoted Chesapeake offers a favorable with amendment testimony in support of HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

UProoted Chesapeake is a Community Organization based in Harford County, Maryland. Our main goal is to empower military connected and English learner students by creating inclusive events and cultural educational opportunities. Although we are a relatively new organization, we've made significant strides in connecting with the Immigrant community by partnering with local organizations. Through these collaborations, we've been able to provide services in their native language, helping families overcome language barriers. This has enabled them to better integrate into the community and access valuable resources that were previously out of reach.

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.

Our families deserve to feel protected, they deserve to feel safe; how will that be possible if they are constantly in fear. When local police officers are given the authority to enforce federal immigration laws, it can deter immigrants from participating in community events, educational programs, or other activities that could enhance their integration into society. This can especially harm school-age children in immigrant families, who may miss out on vital educational opportunities or feel unsafe in their own schools.

Amendment Recommendation: As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, we urge the removal of Sections 9-309(A) and (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 legal risk. Holding individuals past their release for civil immigration matters is unlawful, and transfer often results in wrongful detention and wasted state resources. Maryland must uphold due process and disentangle immigration enforcement from the criminal justice system.

UProoted Chesapeake urges the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.