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**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,

My name is Dominique Lee and today I am reaching out to offer a **favorable with amendment** testimony in support of **HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**

As a daughter of immigrants, I know firsthand the struggles that immigrants face in this country. Many come here with nothing and work hard to restart their lives to provide security and comfort for their families. Immigrants are focused on getting by and helping their families, the narrative that they are committing crimes or taking away from our country is simply false. Research shows that immigrants commit crimes at lower rates than the U.S.-born population and government services require documentation in order to access services such as SNAP and Medicare.

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.

Creating fear in our communities is not the solution, especially to those who are contributing positively to our communities. Additionally, at a time where our state is facing a budget deficit, I don't see how it makes any sense to allow local governments to redirect their limited funding to an effort that will harm communities.

**Amendment Recommendation:** As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, we 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.

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