

Date of Hearing: February 27th

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Testimony on HB 1222 - Favorable with Amendments

HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

House Judiciary Committee

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

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

I am a proud resident of the historic preservation district of Washington Grove which is surrounded by the most diverse community in the United States, namely Gaithersburg, Derwood and Rockville. I am also a psychiatrist who sees patients at a hospital in Rockville and at an emergency psychiatric center in the greater Washington DC area.

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.

My patients trust me to help them at their lowest moments, many of my patients come in with suicidal ideation, sometimes with homicidal ideation and they are looking for help. If they are scared to seek help because of fear they will be arrested, deported, not treated with dignity and

be wrested from their families including children, they will not seek the help they need. Diving down to this level of depravity is not who we are as a country. This is not who I am as a physician. My patients need to feel safe going to the hospital, going to the doctor's office, going to their place of worship and going to pick up their kids at school. These people are part of my loving community and I will do what I can to protect them.

I greatly respect our local law enforcement; they have already been tasked to handle mental health crises on top of their routine law enforcement work. We should not have our local law enforcement, untrained in the humane or considerate treatment of immigrants, do the work of anti-immigrant administrations.

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

As our neighbors, immigrants deserve to be treated like anyone should be treated. Private, sensitive locations should be respected. Immigration police action should have humane and common-sense limits. Thus I urge the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.

Anna Spector, MD MPH