



Testimony in SUPPORT of 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,

Indivisible Howard County is pleased to offer **a favorable with amendments testimony in support of HB 1222– Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act).**

Established in 2017 as part of the national Indivisible movement, Indivisible Howard County has more than 900 members focused on making our state safe, equitable, and welcoming for all residents.

The Maryland Values Act will end the existing 287(g) agreements in Harford, Frederick, and Cecil counties and prevent any new agreements in the state. Indivisible Howard County supports HB 1222 for the following reasons:

- 287 (g) agreements take up county staff time and resources that should be focused on policing our communities. Law enforcement positions are unfilled in many Maryland jurisdictions. We cannot burden existing officers with additional responsibilities.
- 287(g) agreements can cost counties money. While ICE covers the cost of training deputized officers, state and local governments are responsible for all personnel costs, including salaries, benefits, and overtime, as well as all administrative supplies (<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/287g-program-immigration#:~:text=Researchers%20have%20found%20that%20287,Latino%20and%20Black%20community%20residents>). According to a recent article in the NY Times, “Currently, there are no federal funding streams dedicated to compensating local law enforcement for this type of work.” (<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/12/us/politics/trump-sheriffs-immigration.html>)
- 287(g) agreements promote racism and racial profiling. The overwhelming number of people detained through the 287(g) program are Black or Latino. Racial profiling through the 287 (g) program in Frederick County led to a \$25,000 settlement paid by Frederick County taxpayers.
- 287 (g) programs do not protect the public against serious crime. Nationally and in Maryland, most people detained through 287(g) programs have held for low-level offenses including traffic violations.
- 287(g) programs undermine public trust in law enforcement leading to less cooperation with police. Immigrants are less likely to come forward as witnesses, provide tips, and seek protection. (<https://www.aclu.org/publications/license-abuse-how-ices-287g-program-empowers-racist-sheriffs>)

While there have been widely publicized cases of violent crimes committed by immigrants, multiple studies have shown that both undocumented and documented immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes than people born in the US. Putting excess police staff time on arresting immigrants will not make our communities safer.

Amendment Recommendation: Indivisible Howard County urges 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.

Indivisible Howard County urges the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.