

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,

INDIVIDUAL/ORGANIZATION offers a **favorable with amendment** testimony in support of **HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**

I am a retired Registered Nurse (RN) who has been an immigrant advocate for many years, and although I am no longer in an active patient-facing role, I dedicated my life to providing for patients in vulnerable or life-altering situations. The values and beliefs that brought me to become a provider are still at the core of my ethics. Over the years – each year in fact – I have seen the connection between the patients and healthcare providers weaken. Now, in today's political climate, many "authorities" and politicians are attempting to enforce policies that further the weakening foundation of the patient-provider relationship. These policies worsen the situation by making patients feel more vulnerable and scared of their providers – these policies are introducing fear into our clinic space. This is detrimental to healthcare because trust is key to the success of every provider, but especially nurses. Patients deserve to feel safe and comfortable to discuss their healthcare with the nurse in front of them, not anxious. We know that increased anxiety leads to worse health outcomes. For healthcare providers today to act ethically and morally, we need to ensure the privacy and our oath to confidentiality for our neighbors in the immigrant community. For these reasons and to serve my ethical and moral duty that I learned as a nurse, I urge the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments to HB 1222.

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.

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. Maryland must uphold due process and disentangle immigration enforcement from the criminal justice system."

I/ORGANIZATION **urges the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.**