

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,

Students F.A.I.R offers a **favorable with amendment** testimony in support of **HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**

Student F.A.I.R is a Montgomery County, student-led organization that advocates for the rights of immigrant youth and families all around Maryland. Our mission is to incentivize and educate students to fight for policies that protect and empower immigrant communities, making sure they receive the same possibilities and can access the same resources and protections as any other individual. Through advocacy, community engagement, or grassroots organizing, we work to help immigrant families, including those targeted by ICE. Personally, this bill is a major problem for me as I live in a community and attend a school that has a large hispanic population, many of whom are my close friends.

These individuals lift up this country doing labor that many average Americans would not dare to do, all aiming to receive citizenship which is denied to them unceasingly. These individuals are like any other human, with the same capabilities and do not cause any harm. In fact, immigrants do more good than bad, making me be completely enraged with the constant depression these minorities keep receiving and commit myself to attempt to make a change. This bill would fundamentally allow and incentivize racial profiling, completely undermining the basic values of equality that are supposedly existent in Maryland. ICE injects fear into individuals, making life a living damnation, disrupting diverse communities that share cultures such as food or music, often bringing tourism or added beauty to a community. By implementing this bill, numerous families will be in fear of leaving their residences, prohibiting them from access to resources or support.

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, Mario Ben Arias, with Student F.A.I.R., **urges the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.**