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Testimony in support of House Bill 1222

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)

To: Hon. Luke Clippinger, chair, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Jerry Kickenson, Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network
Date: February 25, 2025

We are writing in **support of House Bill 1222, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act), with amendment**, on behalf of the Congregation Action Network (CAN). The Congregation Action Network is a network of faith communities in Washington, DC, and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs acting in solidarity to end detention, deportation, profiling, and criminalization of immigrants and demanding and upholding justice, dignity, safety, and family unity. With congregations and members throughout the capital area, including congregations with hundreds of members in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, we live our faith in advocacy for and solidarity with our immigrant neighbors.

As people of faith committed to justice and compassion for immigrants, we adhere to the sacred texts of most major faiths that call for welcoming the stranger and treating each other with love, dignity, respect, and compassion. We believe in liberation and that immigrant families should be treated fairly and have the same protections as all Maryland residents.

HB1222 will prohibit state and local law enforcement from entering into agreements with the federal government to help enforce federal immigration law, and require those jurisdictions currently in such agreements to end them by July 1 of this year. Our state and local law enforcement agencies have no business enforcing federal immigration law - Maryland residents need these public servants spending their time and effort enforcing state and local laws. These agreements also wreck trust of our immigrant communities in our local law enforcement, to the detriment of all Maryland residents.

The bill would not impact public safety, as it explicitly directs state and local law enforcement to hold individuals for pickup by federal immigration agents when requested, if the individual has been convicted of a crime of violence. However, as people of faith who believe in the power of redemption, we request the bill be amended to remove most or all of the crimes for which correctional facility staff must hold detainees for pickup by federal immigration authorities. These exceptions are too broad, and presume the detainee is indeed not lawfully present in the United States - how is a local or state correctional official to determine that status?

We respectfully urge you to reach a **favorable with amendment** report for HB1222. It will get all Maryland law enforcement out of the business of federal immigration enforcement, and back to their real work of enforcing state and local laws, while still requiring the detention of individuals convicted of a violent crime for arrest by federal immigration agents when requested..

Respectfully yours,
Jerry Kickenson

Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network
Silver Spring, MD