

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,

I, Jaime David Obando Hernandez offer a **favorable with amendment** testimony in support of **HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**

I am passionate about supporting immigrant communities and protecting them from unjust ICE enforcement. Through my voluntary work with local nonprofits, I've seen how difficult it can be for immigrants to navigate legal challenges and live without the fear of deportation. What drives me is the strength and resilience of immigrant families, who continue to contribute to our society despite facing adversity. This issue matters to me because I believe in fairness and the right for everyone to live without fear, no matter their immigration status. My commitment comes from a deep belief in justice and compassion.

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.

Ending discriminatory practices is crucial because everyone deserves respect and fairness, no matter their immigration status. ICE enforcement has a direct, harmful impact on immigrant communities, creating fear that prevents people from seeking medical care, reporting crimes, or accessing essential services. This fear also undermines public safety by eroding trust between local communities and law enforcement. Programs like 287(g) only make this worse by allowing local officers to act as ICE agents, leading to unnecessary deportations and separating families. In Maryland, we must protect immigrants and ensure they can live without fear and access the support they need.

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 urge the committee to provide a favorable report with amendments on HB 1222.