



Sen. William C Smith
Judicial Proceedings Committee
January 18, 2026

SB 0245
Immigration Enforcement Agreement Prohibition

I am the board president of Centro Hispano de Frederick, a nonprofit organization in Frederick, Maryland that helps Hispanic immigrants become successful, contributing members of our community. I am providing this written testimony to provide my strongest possible support for the passage of SB0245.

Well more than 30,000 people in Frederick County are of Hispanic origin. Our Hispanic neighbors play a vital role in our economic well-being, not only through owned, small businesses but also by providing a much-needed labor force that has been helping Frederick to be a vibrant, growing community. For us to continue this positive economic and cultural trajectory, we desperately need this population to feel safe and welcome.

The existence of the 287(g) program in Frederick has impeded growth of all types in our community and has made it more difficult for our Hispanic neighbors to be successful. I want to emphasize that the constant threat of potential arrest under 287(g) has had a chilling effect on *all* Hispanic residents, whether documented or not, because the program does not include guardrails to provide disincentives for racial and ethnic profiling. As a result, many of the people who are critical to continuing economic growth, whether documented or not, are afraid to participate fully in community life.

The 287(g) program is shrouded with poor transparency that undermines public safety. Numerous civil rights organizations, including the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, have sharply criticized the 287(g) agreements for leading to pre-textual traffic stops, racially motivated questioning, and unconstitutional searches and seizures primarily in communities of color.

Just as important, allowing our county sheriff deputies to act as immigration agents has confused the public about local police agencies' functions and priorities. This also sows distrust for anyone in uniform, which discourages members of minority communities from interacting with any police agency. This in turn negatively impacts efforts to use community policing to improve our county.

The fear in the Hispanic immigrant community because of our county's participation in the 287(g) program has led to decreased participation in programs designed to help this population, reluctance to participate in public school programs and fear of leaving home to shop, eat and provide other important contributions to the economic well-being of our county. We simply cannot afford to exclude this critical population.

We urge the General Assembly to prohibit the execution of 287(g) agreements.

Sincerely

Daniel Blum
Board Chair, Centro Hispano de Frederick