

Revised Testimony (Favorable)

Testimony on Senate Bill 245 – Favorable

SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Carla Vincent, and I am a resident of Gaithersburg, Maryland, in District 17. I write in strong support of Senate Bill 245.

SB 245 is fundamentally a public safety and good-governance measure. Immigration enforcement agreements such as those authorized under Section 287(g) blur the lines between local policing and federal civil immigration enforcement in ways that ultimately make communities less safe. When local law enforcement is perceived as an extension of federal immigration authorities, trust erodes—particularly in immigrant communities—and the result is fewer crime reports, fewer witnesses, and less cooperation overall. That is not a theoretical concern; it is a practical one that affects everyone, regardless of immigration status.

I am a second-generation Lebanese American. All four of my grandparents immigrated to the United States between 1910 and 1920. They worked, started small businesses, paid taxes, and built stable lives here. That history shapes my belief that communities are strengthened—not weakened—when people feel safe interacting with government institutions, including the police.

Today, many immigrants and even naturalized citizens in Maryland do not feel that safety. I personally know naturalized citizens who have been advised to carry proof of citizenship at all times out of fear of detention. When lawful residents and citizens feel compelled to live that way, something has gone badly wrong. Public safety depends on people trusting that routine interactions with government will not result in arbitrary or mistaken enforcement actions.

Research consistently shows that immigrants are less likely to commit violent crime than the general population. Yet programs like 287(g) perpetuate fear rather than addressing actual public safety threats. These agreements do not focus local resources on serious or violent crime; instead, they draw local law enforcement into complex civil immigration matters, increasing the risk of racial profiling, wrongful detention, and civil liability—while diverting officers from their core mission of protecting communities.

The consequences ripple outward. Victims and witnesses are less likely to come forward. Parents avoid schools, hospitals, and courthouses. Families lose wage earners without warning, destabilizing households and neighborhoods. None of this makes Maryland safer. In fact, it undermines the very cooperation law enforcement relies on to prevent and solve crime.

SB 245 does not prevent federal authorities from enforcing federal law. It simply establishes clear boundaries, ensuring that Maryland’s local law enforcement agencies remain focused on local public safety rather than acting as agents of federal civil immigration enforcement. That clarity protects communities, law enforcement officers, and taxpayers alike.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 245.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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