



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,

UNITE HERE Local 7 offers favorable testimony in support of SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

UNITE HERE Local 7 is a labor union that represents thousands of hotel, gaming, and food service workers throughout Maryland. Our union advocates for good, family-sustaining jobs for hospitality workers.

At its core, **SB 245** is about upholding Maryland's values - fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state should not be in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or diverting state and local resources into federal immigration enforcement. Instead, Maryland should remain focused on community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law by prohibiting immigration enforcement agreements such as 287(g).

Our members are very concerned about their communities, neighbors, and their safety. Yet ICE actions compromise community safety and create fear. Our Union's mission is to help working people – regardless of their immigration status – to find their courage and advocate for better working conditions. The presence of ICE in our communities undermines that mission and creates a chilling effect for our organizing efforts.

Many of our African American members' families migrated from the South to the North of this country – at times in violation of the law – to seek a place to raise their families free from physical assault and forced labor. Our migrant neighbors so too are seeking a safe future for their families. Collaborating with ICE is standing on the wrong side of history.

Further, our members' children attend diverse schools across the state. Many of our members have lived in this country for generations, but their children have friends who have not. Our members do not want to see their children's friends suddenly deported, or avoiding attending school out of fear.

The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. It diverts local law enforcement away from their primary role of protecting public safety and erodes trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. When trust is broken, community safety suffers.

For these reasons, **UNITE HERE Local 7** urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a **favorable report** on **SB 245**.