

Testimony on Senate Bill – 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 Dr. Beverly Bickel, and I am a resident of the Towson community in Baltimore County, Maryland. I am writing in support of SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

As a retired professor of languages and cultures, I care deeply about the students, colleagues and neighbors with whom I have worked and lived for several decades. I remember the satisfaction of welcoming recent Afghan refugee families and supporting them as they rebuilt their lives here. I was moved by being welcomed into their homes and learning about the ongoing generosity they offered to each new arriving family. I learned about their educations and professions and felt hopeful about all they would offer our county's communities in which they were settling.

I support SB 245 because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear among our immigrant neighbors and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

Our immigrant neighbors are working hard to learn English and continue their own education, support their children, maintain stable jobs and participate in our civic life. But there is so much fear among them that children are missing school, parents are afraid to shop, or go to work. Understandably immigrant neighbors are afraid to participate in creating the vibrant communities we all want and need.

Programs like 287(g) have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. These oppressive programs divert local resources away from protecting communities and instead entangle local agencies in federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods.

We need all of our neighbors to be able to participate in keeping our communities safe and vibrant. We want everyone to be able to respond to the needs of elderly or sick neighbors. Prohibiting these restrictive and offensive 287(g) type programs would allow the full participation of everyone living in our communities and allow us all to do the work of mutual support that enhances what Baltimore County can offer.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.