

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 Sonia Shah, and I am a resident of Towson, Maryland and am writing in support of **SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**.

I have watched with fear and sorrow the brutality and carelessness with which the federal government is currently enforcing its mass deportation campaign. Immigration history is a subject of my work as a science journalist and author so I am also painfully aware of how campaigns of terror against immigrants have been used by nation-states in the past, from Idi Amin's Uganda to Nazi Germany.

I support **SB 245** because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities 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.

As an Indian-American woman, the daughter of immigrants from India and the spouse of an immigrant from Scotland, I feel personally unsafe from ICE violence, despite my status as a US citizen. I have imagined what it would be like to encounter ICE vehicles while driving and be unable to escape their indiscriminate violence, and what it would be like if my own elderly immigrant father was attacked and removed from his home, shackled and unclothed, as recently occurred to a Hmong man and US citizen in Minnesota.

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

Marylanders need to know that they can trust our local officials not to collude with ICE violence and terror. If our state officials collude with ICE violence today, the public's trust in our state infrastructure will be shattered forever—long after the Trump regime and its deportation campaign is over.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.