

SB 245: Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition: Please VOTE AGAINST this bill

Dear Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I respectfully oppose **SB 245 – Public Safety: Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.**

SB 245 would prohibit cooperation agreements between Maryland law enforcement agencies and federal immigration authorities, undermining public safety and limiting the ability of law enforcement to work collaboratively across jurisdictions. Public safety is best served when agencies at all levels of government can share information and coordinate efforts to address serious criminal activity. Effective policing depends on communication and coordination among local, state, and federal agencies—particularly when dealing with serious criminal activity.

Federal immigration enforcement agreements are not about routine civil enforcement; they are often used to identify and remove **dangerous individuals**, including those involved in violent crime, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and gang activity. Prohibiting these agreements **reduces law enforcement's ability to** prevent repeat offenses and **protect victims**—many of whom are themselves immigrants. Prohibiting cooperation risks allowing dangerous individuals to remain in Maryland communities who could otherwise be lawfully detained or removed.

From a **public safety perspective**, **SB 245 creates barriers** to communication and cooperation that could allow dangerous individuals to remain in communities unnecessarily. Law enforcement professionals consistently emphasize that information sharing enhances officer safety and improves outcomes for crime victims. Limiting access to federal databases, intelligence, and coordination tools increases risk during arrests and investigations and undermines efforts to prevent crime before it occurs.

There are also **legal and constitutional concerns**. **States may not obstruct lawful federal operations** or prohibit voluntary cooperation. A blanket prohibition risks conflict with federal law and **could expose the state to litigation**. Courts have consistently recognized that states may not obstruct or penalize voluntary information-sharing with federal authorities.

SB 245 may also have **unintended consequences** for community trust and **crime victims**, including immigrant victims. When offenders are released due to artificial cooperation bans, victims may be placed at further risk, particularly in cases involving domestic violence, sexual assault, or repeat violent offenders.

Maryland can and should protect civil liberties while still allowing law enforcement agencies discretion to cooperate with federal partners in cases involving genuine threats to public safety. Accountability, oversight, and clear policy guidelines are more appropriate than absolute prohibitions that remove professional judgment from law enforcement leaders.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to **vote against SB 245**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Trudy Tibbals