



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 245

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 22, 2026

Social Work Advocates for Social Change strongly supports SB 245, which will prohibit the State, any local unit of government in Maryland, and their agencies from entering into federal immigration enforcement agreements. The bill will help protect public safety and trust, prevent racial profiling, and preserve state and local resources.

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 apart families, undermining public trust, and diverting state and local resources into federal immigration enforcement. Maryland should remain focused on community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law by prohibiting immigration enforcement agreements such as 287(g).

287(g) agreements contribute to escalating fears surrounding immigration enforcement in Maryland. Over the course of 2025, the number of Maryland counties engaged in 287(g) agreements increased from three to eight.¹ This increased collaboration between local law enforcement and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) comes alongside an alarming rise in immigration enforcement actions across the country. According to data compiled by the Deportation Data Project, ICE arrests in Maryland nearly tripled between 2024 and 2025, with 3,308 arrests occurring between January 1, 2025 and October 15, 2025 - compared to 1,353 arrests in 2024.² More ICE arrests mean more families separated and community members removed from Maryland neighborhoods. Collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE intensifies the fear experienced by Maryland's immigrant communities, undermining the trust between local law enforcement and the communities they are supposed to protect.

ICE and other federal agencies are pushing a mass deportation agenda that is threatening the safety of undocumented immigrants, those with status, and U.S. citizens alike. Immigrant communities in Maryland fear ICE's impunity, and many no longer feel that legal status grants them protection. Kilmar Ábrego García's wrongful detention and deportation by ICE intensified these fears and underscores the risk that all Maryland residents currently face.³ Banning 287(g) and other such agreements prevents an unnecessarily expanded ICE footprint in Maryland and will reduce the destructive impacts of its tactics.

287(g) agreements undermine the primary law enforcement function of protecting public safety. When immigrant communities view local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement as entangled, they are less likely to report crimes or seek help. Fear of family separation and unlawful detainment further inhibits these residents from engaging with public services, including public education and seeking health care for critical needs. As discussed during the December 2025 Spending Affordability Committee meeting, student enrollment in Maryland public schools - particularly for English language learners - has fallen below state projections, which DLS attributes to federal immigration actions.



Abolishing the 287(g) program upholds the dignity of Maryland's immigrant residents.

Members of Social Work Advocates for Social Change support immigrants in a direct service capacity and witness the growing fears of ICE enforcement across the state. Individuals report fear of picking their children up from school, filling pharmacy prescriptions, and keeping in-person doctor's appointments. 287(g) is denying these Marylanders freedom of movement and the security to participate in public life without persistent fear of an ICE encounter.

SB 245 will work as a guardrail against discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or perceived immigration status. The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. In Maryland, a study of Frederick County's 287(g) implementation revealed that the agreement enabled local law enforcement to target and arrest Latino community members at higher rates.⁴ Sara Medrano's 2021 case exemplifies these discriminatory practices permitted by the Frederick County's Sheriff's Office under 287(g).⁵ Officers arrested Medrano, a Frederick County resident, during a traffic stop, claiming her car had a "broken" taillight. There was no damage to Medrano's car, and she later successfully sued Sheriff Jenkins for racial profiling and illegal detention. Ending 287(g) would prevent unlawful encounters like Medrano's and protect Maryland residents.

287(g) agreements are established at a cost to the State and local governments. When local law enforcement cooperates with federal immigration authorities, individuals suspected of immigration violations, often arrested for non-violent offenses, may be held for extended periods while awaiting transfer to ICE custody. Additionally, personnel costs - including salaries, benefits, supplies, and overtime - draw on state and local government resources.⁶ We cannot afford to take on the fiscal burden of these federal duties at the expense of Marylanders. SB 245 would help prevent these unnecessary expenses by limiting such detentions and ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used effectively and with thoughtful discretion.

For these reasons, **Social Work Advocates for Social Change urges the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 245.**

Social Work Advocates for Social Change is a coalition of MSW students at the University of Maryland School of Social Work that seeks to promote equity and justice through public policy, and to engage the communities impacted by public policy in the policymaking process.

¹ U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. 287(g) *Participating Agencies*. Accessed January 19, 2026. Retrieved from <https://www.ice.gov/identify-and-arrest/287g>

² Government data provided by ICE in response to a FOIA request, processed by the Deportation Data Project. Accessed January 19, 2026. Retrieved from <https://deportationdata.org/data/processed/ice.html>

³ Miroff, Nick. "An 'Administrative Error' Sends a Maryland Father to a Salvadoran Prison." *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2025/03/an-administrative-error-sends-a-man-to-a-salvadoran-prison/682254/>

⁴ Coon, Michael. (2018, August 8). Local Immigration Enforcement and Arrests of the Hispanic Population. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*. Vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 645-666. <https://doi.org/10.1177/233150241700500305>.

⁵ ACLU of Maryland. *Medrano v. Jenkins*. Retrieved from <https://www.aclu-md.org/cases/medrano-v-jenkins/>

⁶ American Immigration Council. (2025, January). *The 287(g) Program: An Overview*. Retrieved from https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/the_287g_program_an_overview.pdf