

January 22, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Byron Merrick and I am a resident and voter living in Baltimore, Maryland.

I am writing in support of SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

I support SB 245 because it will prohibit the State, a unit of local government, a county sheriff, or any agency, officer, employee, or agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into an immigration enforcement agreement; and will require the termination of any existing immigration enforcement agreement on or before July 1, 2026.

I care very deeply about this issue as I believe the fabric of our society is made up of mosaic threads woven from the many different immigrant cultures and heritages of our people. Enforcement agreements like 287 (g) serve to weaken these ties between cultures, and undermine trust. They create fear in immigrant communities and threaten 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.

The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. 287 (g) 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. Local law enforcement agencies need to be able to focus on local, not federal laws. They should NOT be involved in separating families and destabilizing neighborhoods.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 245. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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