

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 Peta N. Richkus and I am a resident of Baltimore County. I am writing in support of **SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**.

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.

Such agreements only encourage the overreach and unlawful behavior we have witnessed from the Trump administration and its expansion of ICE. It cannot be lost on the Members that the new Maryland detention facility proposed is slated for Hagerstown: Washington County is one of the counties with a current 287g agreement to deputize local law enforcement to help enforce federal immigration laws and allowing officers to question immigration status.

Programs like 287(g) have been credibly 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.

As Secretary of General Services from 1999 through 2002 I was in responsible charge of the Maryland Capitol Police, the law enforcement agency responsible for providing a safe environment for all visitors, employees, and government leaders at all state facilities and State Office centers. **I can assure you, no one would accept the Maryland Capitol Police entering into a 287g agreement. Wouldn't the Members of this committee – ALL members of the General Assembly, in fact – agree?!**

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Peta N. Richkus
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