

TESTIMONY FOR SB0245

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

Bill Sponsor: Senator Smith

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Private Citizen

Person Submitting: Laura Roth

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0245.

I wholeheartedly oppose the involvement of Maryland state and local law enforcement agents in federal immigration enforcement activities and for my tax dollars, as a state resident, from supporting such activities. The bill seeks to ensure that state and local resources are not used to enforce federal immigration laws, thereby protecting the rights and safety of all residents, regardless of their immigration status. Additionally, the bill prohibits the state, local governments, county sheriffs, and their agents from entering into immigration enforcement agreements with federal authorities (287(g) agreements) while mandating the termination of any existing agreements by July 1, 2026.

As a citizen, I am witnessing people confused about whether local and state law enforcement is assisting immigration and customs enforcement and this confusion erodes the public trust in such institutions. As immigration and customs enforcement is increasingly acting in a manner contrary to our constitutional rights and not properly keeping their tracking systems updated in a timely or professional manner, citizens are feeling a need to document interactions. As a result, citizens, who often cannot tell the difference between state and local police operations and ICE/CBP, are finding a need to show up an attempt to document regardless of what manner of enforcement is occurring. This puts both the public and local law enforcement in unnecessary danger.

By limiting the involvement of state and local law enforcement in federal immigration enforcement, the bill aims to build trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, encouraging cooperation and reporting of crimes. This can lead to safer communities overall. Furthermore, the bill ensures that state and local resources are focused on public safety priorities rather than federal immigration enforcement, promoting a more efficient and just use of resources. There is no jurisdiction in the state that has extra funds to allow their police force to participate in federal immigration enforcement without compromising the services they are obligated to provide.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition supports this bill and other legislation that treats law-abiding immigrants with the fairness all Marylanders deserve - I do as well. I believe that by prioritizing the well-being and rights of every resident, we can foster a more inclusive and secure community for everyone.

I support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.