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TESTIMONY ON SB245- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Michael English

My name is Michael English. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB245, as it would ban counties from entering into 287(g) agreements with the federal government

We are seeing in Minneapolis what kind of destruction and harassment can be brought about by overly aggressive immigration enforcement, which is sadly the norm under the current presidential administration. That makes it even more incumbent on Maryland to be as much of a safe haven as possible for our immigrant community, and 287g agreements run counter to this value by their very nature.

As opposed to other forms of local cooperation with ICE, 287(g) turns local jails and police into extensions of ICE -- all at local taxpayers' expense. Added to the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1996 under the "tough on crime" agenda, 287(g) was designed to harm Black and Brown communities.

This isn't an academic concern either. No fewer than eight Maryland counties have entered into a 287(g) agreement. The state needs to act to keep people in these counties from being harmed, and to prevent other counties in Maryland from doing the same thing.

Moreover, in our current challenging budget environment, Maryland counties have to pay staffing costs and open themselves up to costly lawsuits by entering into these agreements. It's just bad all around

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB245

