

# Worcester County Sheriff's Office

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Sheriff



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Chief Deputy

## Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I respectfully **oppose Senate Bill 791**

It is important to clarify what is truly at issue.

In jurisdictions that had cooperative models, such as the former **jail-based 287(g) program**, coordination occurred **after an individual was lawfully arrested and detained on criminal charges**. It was not a street-level immigration enforcement model. It was a secure, controlled custodial transfer process for individuals already in jail, often for serious criminal offenses and in some cases with existing warrants.

SB 791 would prohibit routine communication and coordination with federal authorities unless accompanied by a judicial warrant or court order. That restriction creates operational barriers at the most critical stage, **custody management**.

If local detention facilities cannot coordinate during lawful detention, the likely outcome is not less enforcement, it is simply **more federal street-level enforcement**, outside of the structured detention environment.

I believe this is not a safer alternative.

In Worcester County and across Maryland, we regularly encounter individuals charged with:

- Assaults
- Firearms offenses
- Drug distribution
- Repeat theft and burglary
- Domestic violence

When those individuals are already in lawful custody, coordination with federal authorities ensures:

- Safe and orderly transfers
- Clear custodial responsibility
- No surprise releases into the community
- Reduced risk of re-offense

SB 791 increases the likelihood that individuals with serious criminal histories could be released back into the community before federal authorities can act lawfully within their jurisdiction.

That is not hypothetical, it is a custody reality.

Sheriffs in Maryland are constitutional officers. We are elected locally and accountable directly to our residents.

This bill imposes a one-size-fits-all mandate that removes professional discretion from our local law enforcement executives who understand:

- Their jail populations
- Their crime trends
- Their community dynamics
- Their operational risks

Public safety decisions should be made closest to the communities we safeguard.

For all the aforementioned points, I strongly oppose SB 791.

**“Proud to Protect, Ready to Serve”**

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