

HB0444 FAV
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Testimony on House Bill – Favorable
HB0444 Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

January 27 , 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis , and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ruth White and I live in District 13, Howard County Maryland. I am writing in support of **HB0444 Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**.

I support HB0444 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.

Others will offer more factual testimony. I am a lifelong Maryland resident, a mother, and grandmother and I am offering thoughts and prayers for the important decisions you will be making this session on immigration.

I know from the news and social media that people are being seized by ICE (and other related federal organizations) off the streets of Maryland. I know hard working immigrants who have lived here for years. I consider the treatment unconscionable - masked men grabbing people violently from the streets and from their cars, etc. and disregarding normal due process. We know that the reason given is to find violent criminals and that they are only a small percent of this (any any other) population, and there is no excuse for treating people this way.

People in my faith community and my larger community are so distraught and brokenhearted. For decades the national government has failed to develop a reasonable immigration program. But now the US government is removing long accepted legal processes and using violence and force, sometimes lethal force, to persecute both immigrants, suspected immigrants and even members of the public that try to offer assistance.

The current violence and unjust policy we see at the national level will not last forever and there eventually will be accountability. I and others in my community rely on you, members of the Maryland legislature, to use your power to preserve due process in Maryland. Thank you for your work.

Programs like 287(g) have been 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.

This program makes all in our communities less trusting of local police and less likely to cooperate in finding and preventing ordinary crime. I am concerned for myself and my family that they make our local communities less safe. Our local governments all have budget challenges and do not need to be focusing on extraneous work. They need to be focused on being effective by having the support of all in the community.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **HB0444**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ruth White