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TESTIMONY ON HB0444 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Michelle Mazurek

My name is Michelle Mazurek. I am a resident of Silver Spring, in District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0444, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition.

I am an MCPS parent, a professor at the University of Maryland, and a member of Temple Emanuel synagogue in Kensington.

Immigrants are my co-workers, neighbors, friends, and the parents of other students at my daughter's middle school (Eastern). They are important and valued members of our community in Montgomery County and throughout Maryland. The current environment – with neighbors being threatened and even kidnapped – is terrifying and infuriating. 287(g) agreements make local law enforcement into enablers and perpetrators of ICE's brutal attacks. Ending these agreements – and prohibiting new ones – is not nearly enough, but it is a critical and necessary first step toward protecting our neighbors and our communities.

When local law enforcement resources are used to assist ICE, an already terrible situation only gets worse, and more trust that is essential to our community is broken – frightened residents stop calling for help, stop using public resources, stop reporting abuse, and stop seeking essential care. Maryland must do better to stand up for our neighbors and our values. HB0444 will end local cooperation with ICE, and limit one source of danger and fear.

As a computer science professor who has spent 15 years researching and teaching digital security and privacy, I study professionally the importance of privacy rights to healthy societies, and the detrimental chilling effects that privacy violations can have on communities and individuals. HB0444 will protect privacy by preventing unnecessary collection of immigration status information, making it easier for immigrants and their families to participate in public life.

As an educator, I know that fear and stress make it very difficult for my students to do their best work, to learn, and to achieve their educational goals. My daughter's middle school has a large population of immigrants and children of immigrants, and I know the fear that immigrant families are living with, which impacts people's willingness to send their children to school as well as their ability to access food assistance, social services, and medical care. It is heartbreaking to see these effects in my community. Further, as the granddaughter of immigrants, refugees, and Holocaust survivors, I benefited from the lives my grandparents were able to build

in the U.S. They started their lives over, starting with almost nothing, in the 1930s and 40s. Today's immigrants deserve the same chance to build new lives here, raise their families, and contribute to our community, and they deserve to do so without fear.

With my strongest conviction, I respectfully urge the Committee to return a favorable report on HB0444.