



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: House Judiciary

DATE: March 11, 2026

POSITION: Unfavorable

BILL: House Bill 1536

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) respectfully opposes House Bill 1536. Local law enforcement agencies and municipal governments already operate within established constitutional frameworks governing detention, information sharing, and cooperation with other agencies. However, House Bill 1536 introduces a complex statutory structure that creates legal uncertainty, expands liability exposure for local governments, and imposes new administrative obligations without corresponding resources.

A primary concern is the bill's creation of broad new civil liability. Individuals who believe their constitutional rights were violated may bring civil actions for damages, injunctive relief, declaratory relief, and attorney's fees, while the Attorney General is granted authority to investigate violations, issue subpoenas, bring enforcement actions, and seek civil penalties of up to \$25,000 per violation. These overlapping enforcement mechanisms significantly increase litigation exposure for municipal governments and their employees, even when officials are acting in good faith in complex and time-sensitive situations.

The bill also creates substantial ambiguity regarding what constitutes prohibited "assistance" in immigration enforcement. Because constitutional violations are often determined through fact-specific legal analysis after the fact, the bill effectively requires local officials to make immediate legal judgments in fluid operational situations, increasing the risk of inconsistent application and litigation.

House Bill 1536 further imposes new documentation and compliance requirements, including detailed recordkeeping, notification to individuals whose information is shared with immigration authorities, and retention of records for at least five years. For many municipalities, particularly smaller jurisdictions, these mandates would require new policies, staff training, and record management systems without any funding or implementation support.

Finally, violations may trigger procurement sanctions affecting state contracts and disciplinary action against individuals holding occupational licenses. Because municipalities rely on licensed professionals and private contractors to provide essential services, these provisions could create uncertainty for employees and vendors and disrupt local operations.

For these reasons, the Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests an unfavorable report on House Bill 1536.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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MML represents 88 municipal police departments and roughly 4,000 officers.