

January 22, 2026

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TESTIMONY ON HB#0444- POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

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

FROM: Emily C. Blank

My name is Emily C. Blank. I am a resident of District 47a. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#0444, Prohibition of Immigration Enforcement Agreements.

I am a retired economics professor (38 years at Howard University). I am also a member of congregation Oseh Shalom in Laurel, and a core leader of the Maryland chapter of Bend the Arc, Jewish Action. The Hebrew Scriptures tell us many times not to oppress the stranger, and it would be hard to argue that ICE and CBP employees are not currently oppressing immigrants. A number of immigrants died in custody last year; some have died after being deported through lack of access to medicine or political violence.

From the point of view of our national self-interest immigrants make positive contributions to our country's economy. In my considered opinion, if ICE continues to deport immigrants working in the United States, we will have a shortage of not only farm laborers, construction workers and workers in the restaurant industry, but technology employees, educators, child care providers, and a multitude of small business owners, as well as well as nurses, nurses' aides and other healthcare workers. From a completely self-interested point of view, I am worried about finding affordable care if I become sick or disabled due to age, and that anxiety is compounded as deportations exacerbate the shrinking number of healthcare workers.

I realize that the Maryland legislature cannot stop ICE or the CBP, but I have strong objections to local and state police assisting them. Indeed, I would like to see Maryland police arrest ICE officers who break the law.

In short, I request that the legislature refrain from entering into 287g agreements with HB #0444.