

Tuesday, January 27, 2026
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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: Susan W. Tafler

My name is Susan Tafler. I am a resident of District 21. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB0444, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

Thank you to the many co-sponsors of this bill that will prohibit the State, a local government, a county sheriff, or any agency, officer, employee, or agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into an immigration enforcement agreement.

I am the granddaughter of four immigrants from Eastern Europe who came to America for freedom from forced conscription and freedom from arrest for unionizing activities as well as better economic opportunities and safety from antisemitic pogroms. They came to America in the 1910s, before the restrictive immigration laws of the 1920s (and later) were enacted. If my grandparents had been forced to stay in Eastern Europe or sent back from America, my parents, uncles, and aunts would not have been born as US citizens and likely would have perished in the Holocaust. And I, who was born in 1947, would likely never have been born.

As a Jew guided by our sacred texts, I am mindful that the Bible commands us: “When strangers [immigrants] reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The sojourners who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19: 33-34).

US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the primary agency terrorizing immigrant Marylanders. ICE has created 287(g) agreements with county sheriffs or police, to deputize them to act as ICE agents. I find it alarming that eight Maryland counties currently have 287(g) agreements, and I believe that we must stop that collaboration and prohibit state and local law enforcement from entering into these agreements. Such 287(g) agreements undermine public safety, make brown and Black communities targets for racial profiling, and turn local law enforcement into enablers of ICE’s brutal attacks. While prohibiting local and state 287(g) agreements will not stop ICE agents themselves, it will be essential to prevent collaboration with this brutality. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0444.**

