

Testimony on House Bill 444 – Favorable
HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements –
Prohibition

House Judiciary Committee

January 27, 2026

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

My name is Lana Foley, and I am a resident of Wicomico County in Salisbury, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

Today, our County Executive, Julie Giordano, after testifying yesterday at a Senate hearing, announced that we have signed a 287(g) agreement. She stated in November that our county would be *pausing* the signing until after the legislative session to see what happened at the state level. We have leaders in our community who openly worship the current administration and make no effort to hide it. We are begging here in Wicomico County for help to have a voice and to protect the residents and immigrants who mean so much to our community.

We are tired of the hatred toward our communities that happens behind closed doors while leaders publicly pretend to support and appreciate us. We are tired of leaders saving face for votes without actually caring about our immigrant community. There is absolutely no need for our county to have an ICE cooperation agreement when counties like Montgomery County are paving the way to ensure this is handled legally and respectfully.

No one wants legitimate criminals on the streets, but the idea that our county leaders are using violent ICE behavior both across the country and in our own county to justify this agreement as a way to protect the public is laughable. They know this will not make a difference. With TPS being removed next month for many members of our Haitian community, this decision is putting them in an impossible and dangerous position.

Our national administration has made these individuals criminals simply by removing TPS. People we invited to build homes and lives in Wicomico County. We welcomed them without providing a realistic financial pathway or adequate support to become citizens beyond the permits that initially brought them here. Our county is supported by these incredible human beings, and we should be doing more for them, not less.

Sheriff Mike Lewis has stated that our immigrant community is not a crime problem and that immigrants are more often the victims of crime. We understand that the model selected is the least severe of the three, and we support connecting truly dangerous individuals to ICE when necessary; however, we do not need a 287(g) agreement to do that. While we cannot stop ICE, joining forces with them sends a clear message to our community that they are not supported, cannot trust local leadership, and are seen as unworthy of protection.

I support HB 444 because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities and ultimately undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses even when they are victims themselves. Is that rational? Maybe not but fear creates an emotional environment.

In December, a young mother was taken in front of my home after dropping her daughter off at school. The child's father called ICE on her because of a custody dispute. This shows how ICE is being weaponized as a tool for revenge, and it is yet another reason our county should not support this system in any way.

People are being taken outside courthouses and from their workplace where they are paying taxes and contributing to our economy. They are being harassed by members of our local community, and children are being bullied. We need to do better for our fellow human beings. We are all people who want safety, dignity, and opportunity. We must create pathways that make it easier for people to become citizens instead of blaming them for systems designed to fail them.

Thank you for your time and your efforts on this matter. You have the opportunity to help change history in our state. We believe in you.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 444.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Lana Foley