



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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HB 0444 Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition
Judiciary Committee, January 27, 2026
SUPPORT

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. Founded in 1956, WDC is one of Maryland's largest and most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. WDC is known for its advocacy for law and policy to improve the lives of women and their families.

WDC urges swift passage of **HB 0444 Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**. We support its statewide ban prohibiting municipalities from entering into new immigration enforcement agreements and requiring termination of all active agreements.

Immigration enforcement agreements such as 287g agreements, in which local and state law enforcement are deputized by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with certain immigration enforcement powers, have no place in the State of Maryland. Such agreements make Marylanders demonstrably less safe in their communities.

As it exists today, ICE [operates as a para-military force](#) that engages in [racial profiling](#), [civil rights violations](#), [family separation](#), and [violence against immigrant communities and U.S. citizens](#). For people detained by ICE, it can be deadly. [In 2025, 32 people died in ICE custody – the agency's worst year in more than two decades](#). Maryland law enforcement must not participate in or aid this lawless, deadly regime.

Cooperative agreements with ICE make it more difficult for local law enforcement to operate effectively; they drive a wedge between local law enforcement and the Maryland residents they serve. Many leaders in local law enforcement have spoken publicly on the dangers of immigration enforcement agreements with ICE. For example, [in explaining](#) his stance on immigration enforcement agreements, Montgomery County Police Chief Marc Yamada said, "We dedicate our local resources to crime prevention, crime solving and constitutional policing. In order to be effective, we need all members to trust local law enforcement and to help us prevent crime or other dangerous situations they observe." Trust in local law enforcement is critical to residents feeling safe in their communities and maintaining the communication that prevents and addresses crime.

WDC applauds the sponsors of **HB 0444**. A statewide prohibition on immigration enforcement agreements between local law enforcement and ICE will improve community safety, enhance residents' trust in local law enforcement, and better protect the rights and safety of Maryland residents, immigrant and non-immigrant alike.

We ask for your support for HB 0444 and strongly urge swift passage.

Cynthia Rubenstein
WDC President

Shelby Settles Harper
WDC Immigration Subcommittee

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair