

Testimony on HB 444 – Favorable

House Judiciary Committee

January 27, 2026

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

My name is Marcia Greenberg and I am a resident of Lexington Park in St Mary's County. I am writing in support of **HB 444, prohibiting the use of Immigration Enforcement Agreements between local law enforcement and ICE.**

I am a Jewish American who was raised on accounts of the Holocaust in Germany, Poland, Hungary and elsewhere. We know all too well how Hitler and his SS thugs identified, rounded up, humiliated, starved and exterminated 6 million Jews. One of our very dear family friends, Anna Ornstein, survived Auschwitz. As a young girl in Hungary, she saw how the Nazis and Gestapo grew more powerful by the day. Until her passing last year, Anna was a strong and courageous voice reminding people of how her family had perished and she suffered. She knew that not enough was done to stop them before it was too late. Nothing that we are seeing is new; and the growing threat is not hypothetical.

The steps that we are seeing, moving toward a hate-driven secret policy, have all been seen before. And for those of us who have always wondered, "How could the Germans have let that happen?" we know that it is now on us to speak up, speak out, and stop it from growing in our country. In Nazi-controlled areas, more people needed to speak up and defend targeted populations. But some did – and just as principled, heroic people joined the Resistance, we must do ABSOLUTELY everything that we can to stop ICE. We need to do this morally, for our immigrant neighbors. But we must also take action for ourselves, because ICE has expanded from criminals to innocent people, from people here unlawfully to people who have followed the rules, from people who are not US citizens to those who are citizens and have even fought to protect our country. ICE tactics are certainly part of a much large scheme of authoritarian control.

In her final years, our brave and resilient friend, Anna, watched Trump, Stephen Miller and others in absolute horror. It was all TOO familiar – and threatening. In her memory and honor, and learning from the horrors of history, **we must act with resolve, in any ways that we can.**

With Republicans controlling the White House and Congress, and with MAGA controlling Republicans, we cannot stop the madness and cruelty at the national level. Nor can it be stopped in many of our red counties that have racist sheriffs. We must, therefore, use our state government to prevent collaboration by local law enforcement officers who harbor hate and threaten their very own communities.

Furthermore, such agreements like 287(g) make us all LESS secure by generating fear in immigrant communities. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims. And our local law enforcement resources must be spent on the normal, day-to-day protection of our communities. Time spent enabling ICE terror is also diverting local resources away from protecting communities.

Lastly, no matter our religious upbringing and beliefs, Americans share values of compassion, love for the stranger, and respect for human dignity. Where are those fundamental values within our

communities in Maryland? Programs founded on 287(g) contractual provisions have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. That is not justice. That contradicts the beliefs that we espouse in our churches and synagogues, that we teach our children, and that we honor as Americans.

As a lawyer, I was appalled by the questions posed last week in the Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee, e.g. looking to score points by finding minutiae in the text of the law that will not matter. And I was saddened that concern for the occasional doxxing of ICE agents who are engaged in purposeful intimidate and violence, would somehow counterbalance the THOUSANDS of individuals who are being rounded up, placed in detention without due process, separated from their families, and shipped to other countries where they are tortured in prisons with no way to get out. As has been famously queried during our painful McCarthy years: "Where is your DECENCY?"

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Marcia Greenberg