

Testimony on House Bill – Favorable

HB 444 – 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 Jean Cavanaugh and I am a resident of Frederick, Maryland, State legislative district 4. **I am writing in support of HB 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.**

I am retired now, but much of my career was working for the U.S. government helping to encourage democratic practices around the world. I was always proud to explain our Constitution and Bill of Rights, to describe how the U.S. is a country of immigrants working together to advance American values. Foreign governments wanted to emulate us - things like our justice system and community policing, public libraries and consumer protections. Many were most interested in our civil rights struggles and how people from all backgrounds have protections allowing free speech and freedom of religion, and guaranteeing due process under law.

It would be challenging to promote the U.S. as a model of democracy now.

These basic values are being challenged and violated when it comes to the efforts of this Administration to deport thousands of members of our communities here in Maryland and across the U.S. And by working with ICE, our local law enforcement here in Frederick and other counties with 287g agreements, are complicit in those violations.

The actions of the federal government are chaotic, inconsistent and cruel. Many of those forcibly taken by ICE have permission to be here or have pending asylum claims. Many are our neighbors, friends or employees. They are not "the worst of the worst." Families and neighborhoods are being torn apart. Children are

separated from their moms and dads. Detainees have disappeared into a system with hundreds of documented constitutional and human rights violations.

Until our government creates a just and predictable process for immigration that respects those who share our values of family, hard work, opportunity and fairness, we Marylanders and our law enforcement agencies cannot be complicit in this Administration's detention and deportation actions. We must say no to cooperating with ICE.

I support **HB 444** because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities and undermine public safety for everyone. 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.

Programs like 287(g) have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. Even if local law enforcement officers are not “commissioned” as ICE officers, they still make decisions on who to pull over for traffic stops and other minor civil infractions. If arrested, the LE officer knows they can possibly turn a person with a certain accent, appearance, or name over to ICE. Sadly, there is still racism in our communities and even among some LE.

Some legislators think there is no support in District 4 for banning 287(g) agreements. I beg to differ. There are immigrant justice supporters from Urbana to Emmitsburg, Middletown to Adamstown.

Please vote favorably for HB 444 and make sure it is a clean bill completely banning 287(g) agreements and all agreements between Maryland law enforcement and ICE/CBP. I urge you to pass this bill early in the session with no carve-outs or compromises.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **HB 444** with no carve-outs or compromises.

Thank you.

Jean Cavanaugh, Frederick, MD 21702