



House Judiciary Committee

January 27, 2026

**Re: House Bill 444 – Judicial Proceedings – Public Safety Immigration Enforcement
Agreements Prohibition**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter (NASW-MD), representing over 2,600 social workers across the State of Maryland, supports House Bill 444, legislation that would prohibit state and local entities from entering into public safety immigration enforcement agreements.

NASW-MD's support for House Bill 444 is grounded in the NASW Code of Ethics, which establishes the profession's core values and ethical obligations to promote human well-being and advance social justice. This legislation aligns directly with the ethical principles of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of human relationships.

Immigration enforcement agreements between local governments and federal authorities have been shown to undermine trust between immigrant communities and public institutions. When residents fear that interactions with local government agencies, law enforcement, courts, schools, or health providers may lead to immigration consequences, they are less likely to seek services, report crimes, or participate in community life. This erosion of trust negatively impacts public safety, community health, and access to essential services for entire communities.

The NASW Code of Ethics calls on social workers to challenge social injustice and advocate for policies that reduce harm to vulnerable and marginalized populations. Immigrant individuals and families are particularly impacted by policies that blur the line between local public safety functions and federal immigration enforcement. House Bill 444 advances social justice by preventing policies that disproportionately harm these communities and create barriers to safety and stability.

Further, the ethical principle of Dignity and Worth of the Person affirms that all individuals deserve respect, protection, and the ability to live without fear. By prohibiting immigration enforcement agreements, House Bill 444 helps ensure that Maryland residents can access public spaces, services, employment, education, and places of worship without fear of enforcement actions unrelated to public safety.

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The Importance of Human Relationships, another core ethical principle, underscores the necessity of trust between residents and the systems designed to serve them. Social workers rely on this trust to effectively provide services and support families and communities. House Bill 444 promotes policies that preserve and strengthen these essential relationships.

For these reasons, NASW-MD urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 444 and advance the legislation to the full House. This bill reflects Maryland's commitment to ethical governance, community well-being, and policies that prioritize safety, dignity, and inclusion for all residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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