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David M. Friedman  
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**TESTIMONY ON HB444 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings**

**TO:** Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** David M. Friedman

**My name is David Friedman. I am a resident of Colesville/Cloverly in District 14. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB444, Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings.**

I am an active member of Oseh Shalom, a Jewish Reconstructionist congregation located in Laurel, MD. In Jewish tradition, our sacred texts insist that we turn our own experiences of being outsiders in a foreign land, something my maternal grandparents experienced, into compassion for those experiencing the same today. In fact, care for “the stranger” is mentioned more times in the Torah than any other commandment. Thus, I am obligated to stand up for the safety of immigrants in my community.

Over the past year, I have been distressed to see how President Trump is not only focused on mass deportations but deploying Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other Federal agencies to terrorize immigrants and entire communities of color. With Congress tripling ICE’s budget to more than \$75 billion last summer, it has become clear that current brutal and lawless tactics will only increase significantly. We have seen the number of Maryland counties with 287g agreements with ICE grow from 3 to 8 just in the last year as some local sheriffs demand collaboration with the Trump administration. Maryland’s immigrant families are an essential part of our communities, paying their taxes and contributing to local economies. Data shows that they commit crimes at lower rates than U.S.-born citizens. They are entitled to equal protection under the law and deserve to be treated with human dignity. While I realize that prohibiting local and state 287(g) agreements will not stop ICE agents themselves, I believe HB444 is essential to prevent collaboration in Maryland with the brutality we are seeing from the Trump administration.

The current moment calls on all of us to be brave and join Delaware and a half-dozen other states that have passed a clean and comprehensive ban on all 287(g) agreements as part of our ongoing effort to defend due process, public safety, and justice for all Maryland residents. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB444.