

Honorable Chair Barlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tatiana Santos, and I am a resident of Frederick, Maryland, where we have the longest standing 287(g) agreement in the country. I am speaking today in support of HB444.

Two months ago, I was stopped by local police for what the officer told me was “expired tags.” My tags had just been renewed and the sticker on the plate read 2029 so the fact that they were expired was disputable. After 15 minutes of exchange where the officer asked me to provide my license, my registration, and ultimately my insurance card, it was determined that there must have been a glitch in the MVA system. I was given a warning. When I got home and read my warning document, I noticed under the Race section, it listed HISPANIC in bold letters. At that moment, it became clear that I was not stopped for expired tags, but rather for driving while Hispanic. That experience left me wondering what would have happened if I had an accent or didn’t have the right documents on me? And, whether I can trust the police in future interactions.

My situation is not unique. In my community advocacy work, I recently interviewed a family whose loved one was stopped by the police for having an expired license. Uriel was taken into custody for driving with an expired license and deported. His family, which includes a 6 month old baby, is now falling on hard times. They have a fear of leaving their home and of having any type of interaction with local police officers.

I support **HB444** 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a **favorable report** on **HB444**.