

Testimony on House Bill HB0444 – Favorable

HB0444 Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition
House Judicial Proceedings Committee
January 27, 2026

Introduction

Dear Chair Williams and Members of the Committee,
My name is Deborah Shulman, and I am a resident of Olney, Maryland, in District 14. I am writing in strong support of HB0444 Public Safety: Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

Personal Connection

I care deeply about this issue because my daughter-in-law is a naturalized citizen. I fear for her safety and that of her family, even though they are law-abiding Americans. ICE's actions are too often driven by quotas, bonuses, and performance targets rather than genuine public safety concerns.

I also volunteer daily with a mutual aid group that supports immigrant families. These individuals are hardworking people with homes, jobs, families, and deep ties to their communities. They pay taxes and contribute to our state just like everyone else.

My daughter-in-law is a teacher, and my son is a principal. Many of their students are immigrants. I see firsthand how these families enrich our schools and strengthen our communities.

I would warn people against visiting counties with 287(g) agreements, and I know many others would do the same. Taxpayer dollars should not fund policies that create fear and division.

Public Safety Concerns

No one should have to fear ICE or agencies that assist ICE. Too often, enforcement efforts focus on numerical targets instead of real threats to public safety. Research consistently shows that immigrants are far less likely to commit violent crimes than the general population, yet harmful misinformation continues to be repeated at the highest levels of government.

287(g) agreements do not make communities safer. In fact, they undermine safety. Victims and witnesses are afraid to report crimes, and trust between law enforcement and the community erodes. When local law enforcement notifies ICE about detained immigrants, individuals can be denied due process and presumed guilty before ever having their day in court. This is unjust and illegal.

People attempting to follow the law and obtain citizenship are forced to make impossible choices: attend routine immigration appointments and risk detention, or stay home and jeopardize their status. Families lose breadwinners, children live in fear, and entire

communities are traumatized. Counties should not be worsening these harms.

Why 287(g) Agreements Are Harmful for Maryland

Research shows that 287(g) agreements do not reduce crime. Instead, they create fear of law enforcement, discourage cooperation with police, and leave crimes unreported. When witnesses and victims remain silent, communities become less safe for everyone.

Maryland is also facing serious financial strain due to federal cuts. Our state tax dollars are already stretched thin and should not be used to support law enforcement practices that inflict harm on immigrant communities. Continuing 287(g) agreements is neither fiscally responsible nor effective public policy.

Conclusion

Maryland should follow the example of other states that have ended 287(g) agreements. As the Free State, we have both a moral and fiscal obligation to protect the rights and dignity of all residents. Our tax dollars should be used to strengthen trust, improve safety, and support our communities—not to fund practices that cause fear and harm.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable vote for SB 245.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
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