

Hearing Date: Tuesday, 1/27/26 at 2:00 PM
Paul Holmes
Silver Spring, MD 20901

TESTIMONY ON HB444 - FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

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

FROM: Paul Holmes

My name is Paul Holmes. I am a resident of District 19 and I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of HB444, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition. This critical legislation will help ensure that all state residents feel safe, valued, and welcome in our communities, while upholding civil and constitutional rights.

Like you, our family, neighbors and church members are working for peace and justice in our community and in the world. We have: hosted trainings and impacted-community events; provided financial and volunteer support to immigrant-focused local NGOs; taught English; provided direct immigrant support; accompanied neighbors to immigration and court hearings; advocated for statewide legislation; and participated in supportive rallies.

Here in Montgomery County, immigrants make up 30% of our population and are integral to the fabric of our community. We know firsthand the value of diverse communities and the vibrant social fabric that is woven when those communities come together to learn, to work, and to care for one another. Similarly, now, we all feel the impact of Trump's cruel deportation machine, disappearing county residents with minimum trace and no due process. The fear and anxiety in our community and places of worship is high and palpable. It has disrupted family and community life making fearful families miss jobs, school, language classes and food distribution. As of last count, eighteen Montgomery County Public School students have been deported or forced to self-deport.

Collaboration between the Department of Homeland Security and state and local law enforcement makes us all less safe by eroding public trust in police and scaring people from being witnesses, reporting crime and cooperating in investigations. Such collaboration encourages rampant racial-profiling and targets valuable, productive and contributing community members. Moreover, during a time when Maryland and its counties face serious fiscal challenges, such collaboration adds more to the plates of already struggling state and county agencies and diverts our state and local resources to do ICE's job for them.

I strongly support efforts to codify immigrant protections into Maryland state law and to strengthen measures to limit, and where feasible prohibit, the use of state and local resources and warrantless cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any federal agency for the purpose of detention and deportation, ultimately leading to family separation. I urge policies and legislation that focus on ensuring that community members feel safe, not threatened by their state or local governments, including local law enforcement units.

By codifying these protections, Maryland will send a clear message that the state rejects using state and local resources to tear families apart and reaffirms its commitment to Maryland being a truly welcoming and safe place for all residents. I respectfully urge a **favorable report on HB444 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.**

Thank you.