

TESTIMONY ON House Bill – FAVORABLE

House Bill 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

House Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 27, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Bartlett, Vice Chairwoman Davis, and Committee members,

My name is Mindie Flamholz. I am a resident of County, Maryland and have lived in this county for over 40 years and in Maryland for 72 ½ of my 73 years.

I am writing in support of HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition – to prohibit the State of Maryland, any local government, county sheriff, or their agents/employees from entering into new agreements with the federal government to enforce civil immigration law. As you know, Immigration enforcement agreements include contracts, intergovernmental service agreements, and memorandums of understanding (e.g., 287(g) agreements).

As a Jewish woman whose families were victims of pogroms and of the Holocaust, I can only imagine the current fears in “immigrant” communities, whether here legally or illegally. I know what it is like as a Jew, personally, to have experienced antisemitism in my lifetime, just for being a Jew. And though my looks may “look” Jewish, I do not stand out as much as those with darker skin, whose native languages and speech are “different”, just as my families were when they came to this country or how they looked or sounded in their own countries of origin.

My heart aches for “immigrants” - the vast majority of whom are law-abiding, who contribute to the betterment of our communities, state, and nation, who pay taxes and who work hard to become “American”, while choosing to celebrate their cultures, the way I celebrate my culture and religion, make matzah ball soup, have Italian friends who celebrate their culture through food and language and Romanian friends with theirs, and others, as well - many of whom still speak their own languages as they and their children become bilingual. (as an aside, being bilingual is better for our brains!)

My heart aches that our government isn’t more actively pursuing those in our communities who look “fine (white)” and are committing atrocities on every level, whether rape, abuse, neglect, illegal money transactions, money laundering, tax evasion, corporate fraud, neglectful landlords, drunken driving, those who can buy off people, etc. Why aren’t our country, our states, counties, and cities going after CRIMINALS of all colors of skin?

I don’t like giving power to people who never even asked for or even want the kind of power being given to them through 287g - our local law enforcement officers who joined the forces and take pride in serving members of their own and nearby communities, communities with people of all colors, religions, etc. etc.

And, I know that if I needed the police, local law enforcement, I would not hesitate to reach out to them. Though, I do at times wonder if my being Jewish affects how they perceive me in any negative way. Importantly, I DO NOT FEAR reaching out to them in an emergency the way “immigrants” do

now. How can “immigrants” feel safe reporting a crime, seeking help or even cooperating as witnesses? How can they feel safe anywhere in the presence of an officer of local law? How can public safety be maintained and restored as/where necessary without trust?

My family members were racially profiled, detained, scared to go to school, jobs, and religious institutions, forced to leave their homes, taken to camps, slaughtered, with “lucky ones” surviving, even though many didn’t even consider it that since they lost so many precious loved ones – young children, their adolescents, grandchildren, spouses, siblings, parents, grandparents, friends, etc. This is exactly what is happening to the families of those arrested by ICE, the majority of whom have done nothing wrong. Just for being “different”. The way my family members were.

I know immigrant families which have been broken up and have heard the horror stories of all kinds. And heard the fears expressed. All one needs to do is ask. And if someone feels safe enough to answer, the answers are real, and heart-wrenching. Just as were the stories told by survivors of pogroms and the Holocaust and of all traumas.

Please, let local law enforcement do the jobs for which they were hired. Let them protect our communities and provide the resources we need, the security we need to know and to TRUST they are there for us when they are needed and not assisting ICE, not destabilizing our communities with fear and unwarranted arrests, not out tracking and capturing people who did/do NOTHING wrong.

Our local law enforcement officers are knowledgeable and are savvy about the residents of their communities. They do not need ICE to protect their communities. (More funding for better schools, health and medical care, reliable transportation, quality food, affordable housing, social services, etc. -yes! That can help them!) NOT FUNDING FOR ICE And their activities.

I, therefore, respectfully and with admiration for the positions to which you were elected and which you hold for the betterment of our state, urge you to issue - FAVORABLE on HB444.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of this deeply important bill,

Mindie Flamholz