

HB444 Public Safety—Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

Position: Favorable

January 23, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Loreen Heinz; I'm from District 12A and am representing myself.

I am writing in support of HB444 to prohibit Maryland law enforcement officers at the state and local levels from cooperating with immigration officials. There is a discrepancy between what the agency states as its mission and the actual ways the officials are apprehending immigrants.

Cooperation with ICE is not without costs. ICE training is paid for by the federal government, but simultaneously it diverts personnel resources during the training period—time and money that would be better spent enhancing evidence-based community enforcement. Its lawless behavior has resulted in suits against federal officers which are paid by the county involved. Frederick County has had to pay \$500K to settle two lawsuits regarding racial profiling and prolonged detention, actions taken by ICE agents.

There are other costs. While federal agents claim to be arresting violent criminals, actually they are arresting, detaining, and deporting people with no criminal record or with misdemeanor records. They are racial profiling people, including detaining American citizens who look suspicious to them. They are arresting immigrants who are following the law and keeping their court appointments. By acting first and trying to explain later, they flaunt the rule of law and the right to due process.

The brutal tactics used by these federal agents result in another cost—the lack of trust in law enforcement in general. It makes immigrants hesitant to report suspicious activity in their neighborhoods or to serve as witnesses in fear of being apprehended.

Cooperation at any level with ICE implies Maryland condones their behavior. Cooperation at any level makes Maryland complicit in the violence and even the deaths of immigrants and citizens alike at the hands of these officers. Law enforcement officers are supposed to keep the peace, not instill fear and disruption in public life. As it stands 287g agreements are one-sided; the federal government sets the rules, and the state pays the price. True cooperation would be the state agrees to train officers to assist in immigration and customs enforcement, and ICE agents agree to train and adhere to the standards required by all Maryland law enforcement officers. Otherwise, Maryland gets the short end, submits to federal authority, and we're left with a national police force with no accountability.

Thank you for your consideration. Please vote YES to maintain our civil rights in a civil society.