

Testimony on House Bill 444 – Favorable

SB 245 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition House Judiciary Committee

January 27, 2026

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

Presbyterians for Police Transformation offers favorable testimony in support of **HB 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**.

As members of the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church and in response to our understanding of the gospel, we welcome the stranger/immigrant in our midst and work towards racial justice including efforts to redefine public safety and transform policing. Presbyterians for Police Transformation is the body within our congregation charged with leading this aspect of our ministry.

At its core, **HB 444** is about upholding Maryland's values - fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state should not be in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or diverting state and local resources into federal immigration enforcement.

Our immigrant community is under siege by federal government actions. Our state should not be participating in the 287(g) agreements with federal agents because of their documented history of racial profiling, discrimination and wrongful detention. In many instances, immigrants or even those legally here are afraid to go out to shop, go to church, or participate in community activities. They also become less likely to communicate with local police to improve public safety.

We as Christians, along with local businesses and government suffer when the family bread winner is taken, and/or a single parent, leaving a teen as the guardian of their younger siblings. Rather than positively contributing to the community, these families are now straining the resources of our county, community and congregation, as we along with others step up to provide needed assistance.

We support a clean bill which will end 287(g) agreements in Maryland, and oppose creating or mandating any new forms of collaboration with ICE. Local jurisdictions already have the discretion to share information with ICE and honor detainers if they choose; ending 287(g) agreements does not limit that existing authority. We strongly support a clean bill that simply terminates 287(g) agreements in Maryland. This is what will bring Maryland closer to our values.

For these reasons, Presbyterians for Police Transformation urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a **favorable report** on **HB444**

Ruth Noel for Presbyterians for Police Transformation