

Testimony for HB0444

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Williams

Committee: Judiciary

Person Submitting: Donna Hoffmeister, 6 Plateau Place, Unit N, Greenbelt, MD, donna.hoffmeister@verizon.net

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0444. State and local resources should not be used to enforce federal immigration laws because doing so undermines public safety, erodes constitutional principles of federalism, and increases risks of discrimination and rights violations for residents, regardless of status.

Protecting the rights and safety of all residents

When local police are seen as immigration agents, immigrant residents become afraid to report crimes, serve as witnesses, or seek help, making entire communities less safe. Ensuring that local officers focus on behavior, not status, helps protect everyone in the jurisdiction, including U.S. citizens in immigrant families and communities. When residents know that contacting local police will not trigger deportation proceedings, they are more likely to seek help for domestic violence, labor exploitation, or other abuses, making the broader community safer and more just.

Misallocation of limited local resources

Local agencies have finite budgets, personnel, and jail space, and diverting them to civil immigration enforcement pulls them away from their core mission of preventing and solving crime.

Constitutional federalism and local self-governance

Scholars and courts emphasize that commandeering local officials to enforce federal immigration laws undermines local democracy by interfering with communities' ability to decide how best to use their police powers to keep residents safe. Federalism's checks and balances are weakened if the federal government can conscript local agencies into controversial enforcement schemes, especially where local voters and leaders have chosen different public-safety strategies.

Risks of discrimination and civil rights violations

Tying local policing to immigration enforcement heightens the risk of racial and ethnic profiling, wrongful arrests, and unlawful detentions, particularly for residents perceived to be foreign-born.

I wholeheartedly support this bill and recommends a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Donna Hoffmeister

6 Plateau Place

Greenbelt, MD 20770