
ROBERT G. CASSILLY
Harford County Executive



ROBERT S. McCORD
Director of Administration

March 9, 2026

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett
Chair, Judiciary Committee
100 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Opposition to House Bill 1536 – Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency (MELT)
Act

Dear Chairwoman Bartlett and Committee Members,

On behalf of the citizens of Harford County, I write in strong opposition to House Bill 1536.

HB 1536 would place unprecedented restrictions on the ability of local law enforcement and public officials to cooperate with federal immigration authorities. At its core, this legislation attempts to place a statutory “gag order” on local public safety agencies, discouraging and in some cases penalizing communication and coordination with federal partners responsible for enforcing immigration law.

Public safety cannot function in isolated silos. Effective law enforcement requires cooperation across local, state, and federal agencies. Criminal networks, violent offenders, and repeat offenders do not respect jurisdictional boundaries, and neither should the partnerships necessary to protect our communities. HB 1536 undermines those partnerships by discouraging cooperation and creating legal risk for officials who simply attempt to coordinate with federal authorities in the interest of public safety.

Even more troubling is the bill’s attempt to impose civil liability and investigative authority against individuals who provide assistance or cooperation with federal immigration enforcement. These provisions will create confusion and hesitation among law enforcement officers and correctional officials who must make real-time decisions affecting public safety. The message this bill sends to those professionals is clear: cooperation with federal partners may subject you to legal consequences.

The Honorable Sandy Bartlett
House Bill 1536 Opposition Letter
March 9, 2026
Page 2

Harford County has witnessed firsthand the tragic consequences that can result when jurisdictions fail to cooperate effectively across governmental boundaries. In recent years, our community has suffered the loss of innocent lives in high-profile cases involving violent offenders who were present in the country unlawfully. These tragedies serve as painful reminders that gaps in enforcement and communication can have devastating consequences for families and communities.

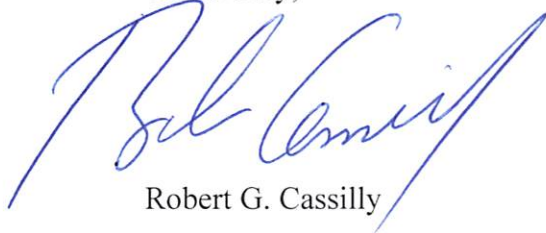
Local governments should not be forced by state law to limit their ability to work with federal authorities when doing so may prevent violent crime and protect innocent residents. Law enforcement officers must retain the ability to communicate, share information, and cooperate with federal partners when circumstances require it.

HB 1536 moves Maryland in the wrong direction. Rather than strengthening public safety, it creates barriers between agencies that should be working together. Rather than supporting law enforcement, it threatens them with legal consequences for doing their jobs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on House Bill 1536.

Thank you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bob Cassilly", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Robert G. Cassilly