

Date of Hearing: Thursday 1/27/26

Name: Andrew J. Miller

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TESTIMONY ON HB444 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Andrew J. Miller

My name is Andrew Miller. I am a resident of District 11B. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB444, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

I am a Past President of Chizuk Amuno Congregation, a large Conservative synagogue in Pikesville, and I am also Chair of the Synagogue Social Justice Roundtable which includes representatives from 12 partner communities and organizations in Baltimore County, Baltimore City and Howard County.

Our sacred texts command us to love the stranger, as we ourselves were once strangers in the land of Egypt, and many of our families came to the United States to escape persecution. For me and for many in my community, protection of immigrants is therefore a sacred obligation. For the last several years our congregation and others have worked in support of Afghan refugee families fleeing the Taliban by providing direct support with the help of refugee relief organizations that worked in collaboration with the federal government until those collaborations were terminated in 2025.

Many of us have also worked over the last 9 years, together with immigrant support organizations, to protect the rights of others who arrived in our country to take refuge from oppressive conditions elsewhere in the world. Immigrants are important contributors to our economy and to our communities here in Maryland, where they make up 17% of the population and contribute to the economy, pay taxes, and create businesses that provide employment opportunities. According to a 2024 report by the Maryland Comptroller's Office, "Immigrants have long bolstered Maryland's population, and they are essential for a thriving economy and economic growth." All of us who are not Native Americans are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants, many of whom came here to escape persecution and all of whom came to seek a better life.

ICE's terror tactics are not focused on public safety. According to testimony before the Baltimore County Council by Stephanie Wolf, Director of Immigration Services in the

Maryland Public Defender's Office, **92% of the increase in detentions of immigrants over the last year is arrests of people who have no criminal convictions at all.** But many are now living in fear that they will be accosted at their places of work, at hospitals, schools, houses of worship, and in courthouses, and that their families could be separated. We have all seen videos of people being pulled out of cars while dropping off children at school, rounded up at workplaces, and kidnapped as they go about their business, often ripping families apart for no reason. Even American citizens are being abducted and having their rights violated. These lawless acts are causing fear and suffering.

It has become clear to me and many others in the last couple of weeks that our federal immigration enforcement agencies are now operating almost entirely outside the framework of federal law and the Constitution, and therefore are no longer legitimate partners in law enforcement. Senator Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, reached that same conclusion in a letter to the editor of Bethesda magazine published on January 8 where he writes "in the absence of ICE's willingness to uphold its core mission, and to do so constitutionally, Maryland's only choice is to formally decouple for the duration of the Trump administration. The credibility of our police agencies is at stake."

The choice before us is clear. I urge you to act with courage, compassion, and moral clarity.

Therefore I respectfully ask this committee to return a favorable report on HB444.