

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Bryce Haines, and I live in Rockville. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on HB0444, which would prohibit the State, counties, sheriffs, and local government agencies from entering into federal immigration enforcement agreements, and require all existing agreements to be terminated by July 1, 2026.

I am in favor of HB0444 passing because it reinforces a clear separation between federal immigration enforcement and Maryland's state and local public safety responsibilities. According to the Maryland General Assembly's fiscal and policy note, these agreements allow local agencies to enforce federal civil immigration law through contracts or MOUs authorized under federal statutes such as 8 U.S.C. §1103 and 8 U.S.C. §1357. Ending these arrangements supports consistent public safety priorities across the state and ensures that Maryland's limited law-enforcement resources remain focused on local community needs rather than federal civil enforcement.

As a resident of one of the most culturally diverse cities in the United States, the fear and distrust of state and local law enforcement that has been instilled in the local community its cooperation with ICE is painfully obvious. I believe that from a community perspective, policies that distance local law enforcement from civil immigration enforcement help build trust, especially among immigrant residents who may otherwise hesitate to report crimes or cooperate with police. This aligns with the bill's intent to prevent unnecessary entanglement between local authorities and federal immigration enforcement while still respecting federal law, which does *not* require states to participate in these programs.

HB0444 also imposes no significant fiscal impact on either state or local budgets, which makes it a practical and responsible public safety measure.

It is for these reasons; I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB0444. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryce Haines

Rockville, MD