

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 444 – IN SUPPORT

HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

House Judiciary Committee

January 23, 2026

TO: House Judiciary Committee

My name is Dawn Sacks and I am a resident of Harford County, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

I support HB444 because immigration enforcement agreements are unnecessary. Local law enforcement has long cooperated with ICE by checking whether arrestees have an ICE detainer and holding them for a reasonable time to allow ICE to pick up their detainees. No one is seeking to end normal cooperation with ICE.

Immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g), however, create a burden on local resources by going beyond cooperation to having local law enforcement doing the work of ICE. These agreements create fear in immigrant communities and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

Programs like 287(g) have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. They divert local resources – tax dollars and personnel - away from protecting communities and instead entangle local agencies in federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods.

The Harford County Sheriff's Office has a 287g contract. This means County residents don't generally see the type of ICE violence so visible on the streets of other jurisdictions. But hiding the problem is no solution. It only encourages local law enforcement to mimic the unconstitutional tactics displayed by ICE everywhere – racial profiling, unlawful stops, illegal detentions, and retaliation against those who stand up for their rights.

Let us not be, as Dr. Martin Luther King explained, the “moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice”. It’s time for Maryland to stand up for what’s right and say no to immigration enforcement agreements.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB444.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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