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Testimony in support, with amendment, of House Bill 444

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

To: Hon. Sandy Bartlett, chair, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee
From: Jerry Kickenson, Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network
Date: January 23, 2026

We are writing in **support of House Bill 444, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition**, on behalf of the Congregation Action Network (CAN). The Congregation Action Network is a network of faith communities in Washington, DC, and the Maryland and Virginia suburbs acting in solidarity to end detention, deportation, profiling, and criminalization of immigrants and demanding and upholding justice, dignity, safety, and family unity. With congregations and members throughout the capital area, including congregations with hundreds of members in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, we live our faith in advocacy for and solidarity with our immigrant neighbors.

As people of faith committed to justice and compassion for immigrants, we adhere to the sacred texts of most major faiths that call for welcoming the stranger and treating each other with love, dignity, respect, and compassion. We believe in liberation and that immigrant families should be treated fairly and have the same protections as all Maryland residents.

HB444 will prohibit state and local law enforcement from entering into agreements with the federal government to help enforce federal immigration law, and require those jurisdictions currently in such agreements to end them by July 1 of this year. Our state and local law enforcement agencies have no business enforcing federal immigration law - Maryland residents need these public servants spending their time and effort enforcing state and local laws. These agreements also wreck trust of our immigrant communities in our local law enforcement, to the detriment of all Maryland residents.

Immigrant communities in Maryland are scared, and with good reason. Our member congregations are either directly or indirectly impacted by the current civil immigration enforcement onslaught. Ending the existing civil immigration enforcement agreements, and prohibiting new ones, is one important step in alleviating that fear.

The Congregation Action Network respectfully urges you to reach a **favorable** report for HB444, that will simply get all Maryland law enforcement out of the business of federal immigration enforcement, and back to their real work of enforcing state and local laws, while aligning Maryland law with our values and commitment to the protection and respect of all Maryland residents.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson

Treasurer and Montgomery County Coordinator, Congregation Action Network
Silver Spring, MD