



TESTIMONY - FAVORABLE

HB444 Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

TO: Honorable Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: The Linda K. Boyd, member of the Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN)

DATE: January 27, 2026

I file this testimony to express my support of HB 444. HB 444 is about affirming what our churches teach about respecting the dignity and worth of every human being, and welcoming the stranger among us. This bill seeks to ensure that our state is not in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or diverting state and local resources into federal immigration enforcement. We believe Maryland should remain focused on community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law by prohibiting immigration enforcement agreements such as 287(g).

The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. It diverts local law enforcement away from their primary role of protecting public safety and erodes trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. When trust is broken, community safety suffers.

Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe said that in God's kingdom, immigrants and refugees are not at the edges, fearful and alone, but are the very center of God's story. "We believe their struggles reveal the heart of God, and we cannot be a true community if some among us live in fear," he said. "We are seeking the ability to fully gather and follow Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves."

For these reasons, I urge the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 444.

The Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network (MEPPN) is a ministry of The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, The Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and The Delaware-Maryland Synod ELCA