



Committee: Judiciary Committee
Testimony: HB0444 – Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition
Organization: Jewish Community Relations Council of Howard County, MD
Submitting: Laura Salganik
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing Date: January 27, 2026

Dear Chair J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice Chair Debra Davis and Committee Members:

The Jewish Community Relations Council is submitting this testimony in favor of the Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

Jewish law says, “*When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The sojourners who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love them as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*” The insistence that we behave with care, equity, and love toward the stranger is the most-repeated command in the entire Torah. It is because of this that we believe that we need to prohibit Maryland, a county sheriff, or any agency, officer, employee, or agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into an immigration enforcement agreement; and requiring the termination of any existing immigration enforcement agreements.

Every day in Maryland, at least ten immigrant families are violently separated, leaving thousands of children without a parent and shredding the social fabric of our communities. The deportation dragnet is sweeping up all immigrants, regardless of criminal record. Between September 1st and October 15th of 2025, two-thirds of those arrested by ICE in Maryland had never been charged with a crime.

287(g) is designed to help ICE arrest people upon release from local jails. Most people released from local jails have been found not guilty, had charges dismissed, or served short sentences for minor offenses—yet under 287(g), they’re treated as criminals and handed to ICE before their day in court. This bill would still allow coordination with ICE when they have a judicial warrant for a convicted criminal. Current ICE operations when done in cooperation with local police erode the trust between the community and local law enforcement. According to Mike Hilliard, retired major of the Baltimore Police Department, “When trust erodes, crimes go unreported, victims stay silent, and dangerous offenders remain on the streets.”

All Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to equal protection under the law and deserve to be treated with human dignity.

We respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0444.