

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

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

I support HB444 because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant and other 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 away from protecting communities and instead entangle local agencies in federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods. Because of programs like 287(g), many fear being detained or deported whether they are in this country legally or illegally.

A family I know has been impacted by racial profiling fears that are the result of immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g). The father is a proud man of Spanish descent and is a US citizen as are his parents and grandparents. He and his wife are college graduates and they both work in a computer-related industry. They have two young children. The father and his children inherited brown skin from his great-grandparents who emigrated from Spain in the early 1900's. Because of the current climate of racial profiling of those with brown skin, this family no longer feels comfortable in public places where brown-skinned people are often wrongly detained by ICE authorities. The father feels he must carry his passport everywhere he goes. He is afraid to even visit a Home Depot because of his fear of being unlawfully detained based on his skin color. Such fear is reasonable given the ICE roundup of immigrants and others in our community.

Prohibiting agreements like 287(g) will improve trust and fairness in our community. There is no good reason for people in our community to fear unfair arrest or deportation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 444.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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