



# HARFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## COURAGE HONOR INTEGRITY

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 0675 Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement – Immigration Enforcement Agreements**

**TO:** Chair Sandy Bartlett and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Erik Robey, Director of Legislative Affairs, Harford County Sheriff's Office

**DATE:** March 4, 2026

Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Erik Robey, and I am here today on behalf of Sheriff Jeffrey Gahler and the men and women of the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) to voice our strong support for House Bill 0675.

For years, the Harford County Sheriff's Office has successfully utilized the 287(g) Jail Enforcement Model as a critical tool for enhancing public safety. This program is not about "policing the streets" or enforcing civil immigration law in the community; rather, it is a commonsense administrative process that allows our correctional officers to identify individuals already in our custody who are in the country illegally and have committed crimes against our citizens.

In light of the recent enactment of legislation that effectively banned these vital partnerships, Maryland's law enforcement agencies have been stripped of a resource that provided an extra layer of security for our residents. HB 0675 seeks to rectify this by requiring jurisdictions that operate correctional facilities to enter into these agreements. By doing so, we ensure that the State of Maryland is not a sanctuary for criminal non-citizens who pose a threat to our communities.

The 287(g) program allows us to leverage federal databases to confirm the identity and criminal history of individuals booked into our detention center. In Harford County, this program has identified over 320 individuals, many with violent criminal backgrounds; including those involved in gang activity, human trafficking, and serious drug offenses; who might otherwise have been released back into our neighborhoods due to a lack of information sharing.

Critics often argue that these programs undermine community trust. However, the Harford County Sheriff's Office maintains that trust is built through transparency and the effective



removal of violent offenders from the street. Our residents expect us to use every legal tool at our disposal to prevent crime. Failing to cooperate with federal partners does not build trust; it creates a loophole that criminals can and do exploit.

House Bill 0675 is a necessary step toward uniform public safety standards across Maryland. It ensures that local law enforcement is not prohibited from doing its job and that federal and local authorities work hand-in-hand to keep our citizens safe.

For these reasons, the Harford County Sheriff's Office respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 0675.

Erik Robey  
Director of Legislative and Community Affairs