

Date of Hearing: Tuesday, January 27 at 2:00 pm
Julie Simon
Towson, Maryland, 21286

TESTIMONY ON HB444 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

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

FROM: Julie Simon

My name is Julie Simon. I am a resident of District 43B. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB-444, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition.

For the last several years I have been the team lead for the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Welcome Circle. During that time we have lived our Jewish and civic values, welcoming two Afghan families to Baltimore County and getting to know others from the over 35 Afghan families that live in Cockeysville. Many of these individuals were actively involved in supporting U.S. efforts in Afghanistan and came as part of Operation Allies Welcome. Others have come seeking refugee status and asylum, fleeing religious persecution, political oppression and gender-based violence. All are working, paying taxes, starting new businesses, going to school and otherwise contributing to the vibrancy of our community.

In recent months, the Trump administration has launched a racist, xenophobic and deadly campaign against immigrants across the United States, including attacking parents and families at schools and at work, deploying military equipment to terrorize communities, racially profiling U.S. citizens and shooting people. It is against this backdrop that I am writing to express my support for a favorable report on HB444, which will bar local law enforcement agencies from entering into 287(g) agreements to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement in Maryland. As we have seen in the eight Maryland counties that currently have 287(g) agreement with ICE, as well as in cities around the county, 287(g) agreements increase racial profiling of Black and brown people in our communities, regardless of their immigration status, and facilitate the horrific violence against local communities, as is happening currently in Minneapolis and elsewhere.

As Jews, we have a long history of welcoming immigrants and newcomers to our community. Many of us, and our ancestors, fled persecution and settled in new places. Maryland needs to be a place where everyone is welcome and new arrivals don't live in fear. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB444.**