

Testimony on House Bill – Favorable

HB 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

House Judiciary Committee

January 23, 2026

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

My name is Gita Lefstein, and I am a resident of Baltimore County, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

I have accompanied a number of immigrants to immigration related appointments and it has brought the issue of ICE detentions and deportations alive for me, not just something you read about or see on TV. The fear and pain in the immigrant community are very real. People are afraid to have any contact with law enforcement. This means they are less likely to report crimes or cooperate with law enforcement, even when they are victims. This leaves all of us less safe. HB 444 would stop immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) in Maryland, and therefore help reduce the fear.

Local law enforcement is supposed to improve safety and help communities. When local enforcement is working with ICE, resources are diverted from helping the community and instead become involved in ICE's terrorizing of communities.

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

Thank you.