

Bill: HB 0444 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

Position: SUPPORT

Madame Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong support of HB0444, legislation that would prohibit local governments, county sheriffs, and state agencies from entering into immigration enforcement agreements.

I submit this testimony not only as a resident of Maryland, but also as a nurse practitioner working in a local hospital, where I see firsthand how federal immigration enforcement practices endanger patients, healthcare workers, and entire communities.

HB0444 is essential to protecting public safety, constitutional rights, and the well-being of our communities, particularly in light of the well-documented actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE has repeatedly demonstrated a pattern of disregarding fundamental constitutional protections, including due process and protections against unlawful detention. Across the country, ICE has detained individuals without warrants, relied on civil immigration detainers that lack judicial oversight, and held people—including U.S. citizens—without probable cause.

When state and local agencies cooperate with ICE through enforcement agreements, they become complicit in these violations. HB0444 ensures that state and local employees are not placed in positions where they risk violating the U.S. Constitution or exposing their agencies to serious legal liability.

ICE's enforcement practices have caused widespread fear and instability in communities. Aggressive raids, workplace actions, and courthouse arrests undermine trust not only in federal authorities, but also in local government and law enforcement.

This fear directly harms public safety. When residents are afraid that any interaction with government could lead to detention or deportation, they are less likely to report crimes, serve as witnesses, or seek help during emergencies. HB0444 helps restore trust by making clear that local and state agencies exist to serve and protect their communities—not to carry out federal immigration enforcement.

ICE's actions have resulted in the separation of families, including the removal of parents from children, spouses from one another, and caregivers from those who depend on them. These separations cause profound and lasting trauma, particularly for children, and destabilize entire communities.

Local and state governments should not be forced to participate in systems that inflict such harm on families and neighbors. HB0444 affirms that our state will not use its resources or personnel to support practices that fracture families and communities.

ICE operations have frequently involved the use of force, militarized tactics, and intimidation in residential neighborhoods and workplaces. These actions have led to physical harm, psychological trauma, and, in some cases, death. When local agencies enter into immigration enforcement agreements, they risk enabling or legitimizing these practices.

HB0444 protects communities by preventing state and local agencies from being drawn into enforcement actions that escalate harm and violence against our neighbors. It supports responsible governance by ensuring that state and local agencies remain focused on their intended roles and accountable to the communities they serve.

HB0444 is a necessary safeguard against constitutional violations, community harm, family separation, and violence tied to federal immigration enforcement. It reinforces the principle that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility and that state and local governments should not be compelled to assist in practices that undermine civil liberties and public trust.

For these reasons, I request a favorable report to support HB0444 and stand for constitutional values, community safety, and human dignity.

Respectfully,

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