



## **Testimony of CANDLE - Favorable**

Regarding House Bill 444

Submitted by Birgit Sharp, 1/23/2026

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of CANDLE<sup>1</sup>. Maryland has the right and responsibility to protect our communities and control our law enforcement. CANDLE stands for a ban to 287(g) agreements, for three reasons.

### **First, participating in 287(g) programs cedes state control over the actions of local police**

- 287(g) agreements deputize local officers to enforce federal immigration laws in a manner dictated by federal—not state—policies.
- 287(g) agreements encourage local officers to use the harsh and aggressive immigration tactics being pursued by ICE.<sup>2</sup> Arrests statewide are running two times higher than in 2024, and almost 9 times higher in Frederick County, which participates in 287(g). That growth has been fueled in part by more arrests of individuals with no prior conviction.<sup>3</sup>
- The state lacks statutory guardrails for ensuring that 287(g) officers act in a manner consistent with Maryland's values and the needs of our communities.

### **Second, public trust is essential for the safety of our communities, and 287(g) agreements destroy that trust in fundamental ways:**

- ICE demonstrates increasing violence toward citizens; releases false statements<sup>4</sup>; and rounds up and detains US citizens, Green Card holders, immigrants granted asylum, and immigrants with no criminal history. Local law enforcement's association with these aggressive tactics jeopardizes public confidence in local police and has an immediate chilling impact on public trust.
- People don't report crimes or support investigations when they don't trust local law enforcement, and this mistrust extends beyond the targeted population to others in the community.
- Trust destroyed will take years if not decades to restore.

### **Third: 287(g) agreements hurt Maryland residents as they boost instances of racial profiling**

- The Supreme Court issued a temporary ruling allowing ICE to racially profile, and we expect this may extend to 287(g) police, who already have a history of racial profiling.
- Participating counties could face serious legal exposure due to civil rights lawsuits tied to racial profiling, unlawful detentions, or other violations of laws.

**Maryland residents deserve the safety of local law enforcement we can trust. We deserve to spend our taxes on state priorities. Ban 287(g) agreements in MD.**

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*Far better to light the candle, than to curse the darkness.*

1 Candle is the Community Action Network for Democracy, Liberties and Equality, based in Anne Arundel and Calvert counties. Our membership is close to 150 people.

2 ICE is the Immigration and Customs Enforcement unit in the federal Department of Homeland Security.

3 Estimates are based on data on immigration arrests and detainers published by the Deportation Data Project and extracted on January 15, 2026. See <https://deportationdata.org/>. The data cover the period from 2024 through mid-October, 2025.

4 *Anne Arundel County Police contradict DHS account of Christmas Eve ICE shooting*

<https://www.wmar2news.com/news/region/anne-arundel-county/anne-arundel-county-police-contradict-dhs-account-of-christmas-eve-ice-shooting>