



HoCoClimateAction.org

Howard County, Maryland

HB0444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Williams

Committee: Judiciary

Hearing Date: January 27, 2026

Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action

Position: Favorable

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

HoCo Climate Action is a 350.org local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#). Our organization works with residents and ally organizations to promote a safe climate and a just and clean energy future.

We urge you to vote favorably on **HB0444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**, which would prohibit law enforcement officers from wearing face coverings while performing their duties unless actively engaged in an undercover operation.

Our work focuses on addressing climate change in a just and equitable way for Howard County and all Marylanders. We inform, educate, and engage with communities and legislators advocating for essential climate justice policy. We work in partnership with other groups and coalitions and seek to support and lift up the issues, needs, and goals of frontline communities and communities of color. Many of these communities are already overburdened and underserved and should not be subjected to local law enforcement acting as immigration enforcement agents.

At its core, **HB0444** is about upholding Maryland's values - fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state should not be in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or diverting state and local resources into federal immigration enforcement. Instead, Maryland should remain focused on community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law by prohibiting immigration enforcement agreements such as 287(g).

We have all seen the many videos of people being snatched, beat up, shot, killed, pepper-sprayed, cursed, thrown to the ground, assaulted, threatened, kidnapped and then disappeared. The 287(g) program has a documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. It diverts local law enforcement away from their primary role of protecting public safety and erodes trust between law enforcement and immigrant communities. When trust is broken, community safety suffers. Many of the frontline communities are already suffering from environmental injustices, and we strongly abhor the practices of immigration enforcement that further these injustices.

We support **HB0444** and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

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