

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

My name is Lee A. Gelwicks, and I am a resident of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. I am writing to support HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

I feel that it is counter to our values to work with ICE and its poorly trained and reckless agents, who seem more of a danger to the peace than any criminal has ever been.

I support HB444 because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

From what I have seen from first-hand accounts across the country, videos taken of protests turned violent and confrontative by ICE agents, I fear for my family's safety. Now, in addition to the worry that my child will be gunned down at school, I have to worry that ICE might snatch her for defending someone or for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. She is ten years old, and I worry for her life every day.

Programs like 287(g) have been linked to racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. They divert local resources away from protecting communities and pull local agencies into federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods.

Banning these agreements is a vital step to ensuring the safety of the citizens of our community.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lee A. Gelwicks