

January 27, 2026

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TESTIMONY ON HB444 - POSITION: (FAVORABLE)
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

TO: Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Ronit Aviva Dancis

My name is Ronit Aviva Dancis. I am a resident of District 20. I am submitting this testimony in support of (HB444), (Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition).

I am the sister-in-law, daughter, granddaughter, great-granddaughter, stepdaughter and niece of immigrants. My relatives have come to the US from Czarist Russia, from a displaced persons camp in post-Holocaust Austria and from South America. Our family, almost all Marylanders, includes people whose first language is Russian, Yiddish or Spanish. My family as I know it would not exist were it not for the US tradition of welcoming immigrants.

That US and Maryland tradition of welcoming immigrants is being savaged by ICE. Under the Trump administration, ICE has abducted Marylanders without cause or notice. ICE has consistently violated the legal and constitutional rights of Marylanders, and is terrorizing brown and Black Marylanders. 287(g) agreements allow local law enforcement agencies to detain people solely on the basis of their immigration status, and turn local law enforcement officers into agents of ICE.

In the last 12 months, the number of Maryland counties with 287(g) agreements has gone up from 3 to 8; the number of Marylanders arrested by ICE has skyrocketed.

Marylanders are counting on you to pass legislation to end existing 287(g) agreements, and to prohibit state and local law enforcement agencies from entering into such agreements. Such legislation will not stop ICE agents themselves, but it will prevent local law enforcement collaboration with ICE. It will reduce the dangers facing so many Maryland families, including mine.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB444.