

Testimony on Senate Bill – Favorable

HB 0444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

January 27, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony IN FAVOR of HB 0444, which will end 287g Intergovernmental Service Agreements between the Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local law enforcement agencies in Maryland.

My name is Lia Nigro; I am a resident of Columbia, MD and volunteer with the organization Indivisible Howard County. In my role doing Communications for them and working on their Immigration Action Team, I have had opportunity to learn about 287g. The facts are rather surprising and there is no doubt in my mind that maintaining such agreements not only goes against my own principles but also, and more importantly to you, against the best interests of Maryland law enforcement agencies and the general public. Here are a few key reasons:

- 287g is a risky investment. While ICE may present 287g as a money-maker, uncovered overtime and administrative costs as well as the expense of holding individuals in jail who would not otherwise be imprisoned will add up. Also, and particularly significant-- costly litigation is likely. ICE is currently immune to civil suits but state law enforcement agencies are not.
- 287g encourages violation of civil rights and distracts officers from their mission of ensuring public safety. An immigration focus often coupled with rewards based on number of individuals arrested can lead to racial profiling. Time, energy, and resources are spent detaining individuals who would normally not have been arrested.
- 287g does not lead to detaining more violent criminals or reducing crime rates. The agreements end up targeting the innocent and low-level offenders. Between 2016 and 2023, 92 percent of individuals deported through Maryland 287g programs had either no convictions or only a “level 3” (lowest level) conviction.

Neither Montgomery or Prince Georges Counties have 287(g) programs, and they each have a higher immigrant population than does Frederick County, which has 287(g) Yet, Montgomery and Prince George’s have their crime rates in recent years at a much greater rate than Frederick has,

- 287g undermines public trust. Especially in the immigrant community, it leads to fear of law enforcement and hesitancy to report crimes or testify in court. Absent these witnesses to crime, criminal justice and public safety suffer.

I encourage you to vote IN FAVOR of HB 0444.

Thank you for your consideration.

Background Information:

Fact Sheet: 287g Programs. American Immigration Council.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/287g-program-immigration>

Position on Proposed Legislation, Maryland Office of the Public Defender, 2025.

https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmte_testimony/2025/jud/1TXTkzUAgN2_SbHBNhBzUQBGpKcaCVnt-.pdf

Research into Immigration and Crime: Advancing the Understanding of Immigration, Crime, and Crime Reporting at the Local Level with a Synthetic Population. National Criminal Justice Reference System, 2025. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/310356.pdf>

Seven Truths Surrounding 287g Programs. ACLU, 2025.

https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/cmte_testimony/2025/jud/1gWde5fwyh9GgxukF7j0agajBeDF8bv g8.pdf