



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony IN FAVOR of HB 444 Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

DATE: January 27, 2026

TO: Del. Sandy Bartlett, Chair, Del. Debra Davis, Vice-Chair,
and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Jim Caldiero, Lead Advocate for Immigration,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony IN FAVOR of **HB 444 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition** that will end 287(g) Intergovernmental Service Agreements between the Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local law enforcement agencies in Maryland

Like many of my fellow countrymen, I watched with sickening horror and dismay the recent murder in Minneapolis of Renee Good, a U.S. citizen exercising her constitutional right to observe the actions of federal ICE officers. At least the Minneapolis Police Officers were not complicit in her murder. In Maryland, however, although we have not yet experienced such ultimate violence on our streets, Marylanders have encountered masked agents as they roam our streets, kidnap our neighbors and throw them into unmarked vans. Every day, at least ten immigrant families are violently separated, leaving thousands of children without a parent and tearing apart the social fabric of communities across our state. The likelihood of a most severe violent event grows daily, particularly as some counties enter into or continue 287(g) agreements with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Maryland's Attorney General Brown's guidance to law enforcement clearly acknowledges that the negotiated Memoranda of Agreements (MOA) between ICE and local law enforcement agencies contradict Maryland law enforcement practices. For example, ICE MOA's deputize local law enforcement officers to ascertain an individual's immigration status. However, Attorney General Brown's guidance notes that officers cannot inquire about immigration status unless relevant to a criminal investigation, are not required to share immigration/citizenship status with federal officials, and may not extend detentions to investigate immigration status. Note also that Howard County's Liberty Act also precludes not only law enforcement—but any county employee—from inquiring about citizenship status.

Moreover, participation in 287(g) agreements is disadvantageous and counterproductive to Maryland and its residents. The program is fraught with unconstitutional racial and ethnic profiling. A 2011 federal Department of Justice (DOJ) investigation, for example, determined that Arizona's Maricopa County Sheriff's Office had conducted routine sweeps in Latino neighborhoods and that Latino drivers were nine times more likely to be stopped than non-Latino drivers. Similarly, another DOJ investigation in North Carolina found that Latino drivers were more than 10 times more likely to be stopped than non-Latino drivers. A 2022

study by Texas A&M University found that these discriminatory practices among agencies with 287(g) agreements spilled over into surrounding non-287(g) agreement jurisdictions. Additionally, the Migration Policy Institute found that half of all detainees were for people who had committed misdemeanors and traffic offenses while a University of North Carolina study found that officers under 287(g) agreements primarily targeted offenders who posed no threat to public safety or had no criminal records.

In addition to leading to illegal racial profiling and civil rights abuses, 287(g) agreements divert needed resources from traditional and effective local law enforcement functions. Local police are insufficiently trained to enforce complex federal immigration laws and local law enforcement participation leads to mistrust in communities and can turn minor interactions into life-altering situations including separation from families. Moreover, while ICE may cover the cost of four weeks of training, counties—local taxpayers—must pay the majority of costs, money that could be put to more effective crime fighting and community safety strategies against real criminals.

287(g) agreements are the embodiment of all that is contrary to my faith which I share with more than 4000 Unitarian Universalists in Maryland, a faith that calls me to promote and affirm the inherent dignity of every person and to seek justice, equity and compassion for my fellow neighbors, including my immigrant neighbors, and contrary to my Unitarian Universalist moral values and the values that are shared by Marylanders in our Declaration of Rights.

I encourage you to vote **IN FAVOR** of **HB 444**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sources:

Maryland AG Brown Press Release: Guidance to Law Enforcement Working with Federal Law Enforcement Agencies

https://oag.maryland.gov/FederalActionsResponse/Documents/pdfs/Memorandum_Law%20Enforcement_OCT%2025.pdf

<https://marylandmatters.org/2025/10/15/attorney-general-limits-what-maryland-police-can-do-when-working-with-federal-authorities/>

Trump Immigration Arrests Double in Maryland

<https://www.thebanner.com/politics-power/national-politics/trump-ice-immigration-arrests-VUHC5BGFJRF6TOX7XKUZFZZDI/>

American Immigration Council, 287g Program Overview

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

Texas A&M Study

["Sheriffs, State Troopers, and the Spillover Effects of Immigration Pol" by Huyen Pham and Pham Hoang Van;](https://scholarship.law.tamu.edu/facscholar/1555/?utm_source=scholarship.law.tamu.edu%2Ffacscholar%2F1555&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages)

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North Carolina Racial Profiling

<https://www.npr.org/2014/08/15/340562910/n-c-sheriff-terry-johnson-on-trial-for-racial-profiling>

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