

January 27, 2026

Testimony on HB 444
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition
Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

Common Cause Maryland supports HB 444, which would terminate active 287(g) agreements and prohibit local governments from entering into new agreements.

Common Cause Maryland believes that immigrants are integral to this nation's foundation and success, contributing to its standing as the longest-lasting and most successful democracy in history. Yet, by forcing immigrants into the shadows, the Trump administration threatens to undermine the multiracial democracy and safe, thriving neighborhoods we all deserve. Allowing local governments to deputize their law enforcement to act as agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) only helps the Administration accomplish its goals in Maryland.

Maryland has the responsibility—and the authority—to protect its residents from federal overreach. This responsibility is shared by all officials, including local governments, who neglect their obligations when they enter agreements with ICE. HB 444 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.

As a child of Haitian immigrants, I personally know the fears that exist in the community. Many, including my family members, entered the U.S. under temporary protective status or through President Biden's CHNV program. They understand that we have long been targeted by ICE, and this administration's racist lies have put the community at greater risk. Communities like mine, which are largely represented on the Eastern Shore, must be protected.

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.

Immigrants have made this country the oldest and most successful democracy, and we should ensure that this continues by banning 287(g)s and holding local governments accountable if any attempt is made to undermine this prohibition.

We urge a favorable report.