



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair
Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair
Judicial Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 1/23/2026
RE: HB044 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement
Agreements - Prohibition

The MLLC supports HB0444 -Public Safety - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Face Coverings

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of SB0245.

HB0444 addresses a critical concern for Latino communities throughout Maryland. Immigration enforcement agreements, particularly the 287(g) program authorized under federal law, to deputize local law enforcement to act as immigration agents. This blurring of roles has severe consequences for public safety and community trust. When local police are perceived as immigration enforcement officers, immigrant families become reluctant to report crimes, cooperate with investigations, or seek help in emergencies. This silence creates dangerous conditions where criminal activity can flourish unchecked, undermining the safety of all Maryland residents.¹

Additionally, Latino communities bear a disproportionate burden under these enforcement agreements. Families live in constant fear of routine interactions with law enforcement escalating into immigration consequences, even when they are victims of crime or witnesses to serious offenses. This fear extends beyond those who are undocumented, affecting entire communities where parents worry about school drop-offs, workers hesitate to report wage theft or workplace safety violations, and victims of domestic violence remain trapped in dangerous situations rather than risk contact with authorities.²

The fiscal impact on local jurisdictions cannot be ignored. Immigration enforcement diverts precious law enforcement resources away from investigating serious crimes and addressing community safety priorities. Local agencies lack the specialized training and resources necessary for immigration enforcement, and taxpayers bear the costs of detaining individuals for civil immigration violations rather than criminal matters.³

Maryland has consistently demonstrated leadership in protecting immigrant families and fostering inclusive communities. At a time when federal immigration policy grows increasingly aggressive, HB0444 represents a necessary clarification of the proper roles of state and federal government. Immigration enforcement is fundamentally a federal responsibility, and Maryland's law enforcement agencies should focus their limited resources on the public safety priorities that matter most to our communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0444.

¹ [Local Law Enforcement Must Focus on Keeping Marylanders Safe](#)

² [Immigrant Families Express Worry as They Prepare for Policy Changes](#)

³ [Federal-Local Partnerships on Immigration Law Enforcement](#)