

NICOLE A. WILLIAMS, Esq.

*Legislative District 22*

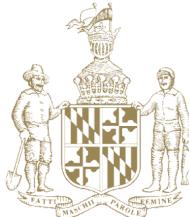
Prince George's County

—  
Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

—  
Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus

Chair, Prince George's  
County House Delegation



*Annapolis Office*

The Maryland House of Delegates

6 Bladen Street, Room 207

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

301-858-3058 • 410-841-3058

800-492-7122 Ext. 3058

Nicole.Williams@house.state.md.us

## THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 27, 2026

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett  
Chair of the House Judiciary Committee  
100 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

### House Bill 444

Good afternoon, Chair Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and the members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams, and I will be testifying in favor of House Bill 444, also known as **Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition**. This bill would prohibit any agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into a certain voluntary immigration enforcement agreement with the federal government, which are commonly known as 287(g) agreements.

The members of this committee will recognize this bill from last year, when I first introduced it as the Maryland Values Act. We have all seen what has happened across our State and across our country since then. Under the current federal administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has caused chaos, confusion, discord, and violence in our communities through a relentless deportation campaign. 287(g) programs across the state assist in this deportation campaign by deputizing local police officers to assist with immigration enforcement in their local communities and immigration detainees, which are civil administrative requests. Detainees are not criminal warrants and thus should not be a part of actions by law enforcement.

At the start of the 2025 legislative session, three counties had active 287(g) programs: Harford, Cecil, and Frederick. Since then, six more counties have entered into 287(g) agreements, including Carroll, Washington, Garrett, St. Mary's, Allegany, and, as of Friday, Wicomico. This is triple the number of counties with agreements in less than a year. This trend makes it incredibly clear that the time to pass a 287(g) ban in our state is now.

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Each of these aforementioned jurisdictions is obligated to spend taxpayer funds and manpower to participate in the 287(g) program, despite the Department of Homeland Security having one of the largest budgets of any federal agency. ICE provides training, equipment, and oversight, but offers no form of reimbursement for the staff time or overtime required to take on this additional responsibility. In a budget year where our state is facing a \$1.5 billion budget deficit, and our local jurisdictions are feeling the pinch financially, it makes financial sense to sunset and prohibit 287(g) programs and transfer those savings back to programs that uplift our communities.

Ending 287(g) programs in our state is not without precedent. Formerly, Anne Arundel County had a contract from 2017 until its termination in 2019. In a [report evaluating the program issued by the County Executive's office](#), they found that the 287(g) program "had no meaningful impact on keeping county residents and visitors safe, nor does it assist in the county's effort to identify and arrest violent criminals." Other states have also passed legislation or issued directives to effectively end 287(g) programs, including California in 2017, New Jersey in 2018, Washington in 2019, Illinois in 2021, and Colorado in 2023. If others can do it, and continue to maintain safe communities for their residents, so can we.

Ending 287(g) programs in our state also makes moral sense when we consider its inconsistency with the values we Marylanders hold dear. Our state has a history of protecting immigrant communities, keeping families together, and opposing the anti-immigrant agenda that has taken hold in our federal government. This legislature has historically passed legislation to protect our immigrant neighbors, including the [Maryland Dream Act of 2012](#), the [Dignity Not Detention Act in 2021](#), the [Family Prosperity Act in 2023](#), the [Healthy Babies Equity Act of 2023](#), and the [Maryland Values Act of 2025](#). Standing up for the most marginalized in our society is part of who we are as Marylanders, and it only makes sense to take this step forward by ending 287(g) programs in our state.

People that we call our neighbors and friends have been targeted because of the color of their skin or their accent when they speak. The people that 287(g) programs target are people who go to work, go to school, and raise their children here in Maryland. Taking this step to sunset and prohibit 287(g) programs in the state is one of the ways we can affirm the values we

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hold dear as Marylanders: that we love our neighbors, that we value our immigrant communities, and that we will defend our own.

My office has been engaged in constant conversation with key stakeholders over the past two legislative sessions, who have emphasized the importance of presenting a clean bill with no exceptions. The version you have before you is just that: it is an outright ban on 287(g) programs in our state. As Marylanders, we must deny this federal administration any tool it can use to inflict harm upon our immigrant communities.

Think about what it would mean to keep this program in place and subject our neighbors to continue living in fear. 287(g) programs tear apart the fabric of our communities through stigmatization, suspicion, and separation. We cannot wait any longer. Now is the time to bring 287(g) programs to an end in Maryland.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 444.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nicole A. Williams, Esq."

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.