

Testimony on House Bill 444 – Favorable

HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

House Judiciary Committee

January 27, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,
My name is Karen Murphy-Keddell and I am a resident of Columbia, Maryland. I am writing in support of HB444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

I am a retired social worker and person of faith who believes strongly in the worth and dignity of all people. What is happening in our country right now to immigrants is cruel and immoral. Immigrants contribute to the betterment of this country and deserve the same opportunities as my ancestors.

I support HB444 because immigration enforcement agreements like 287(g) create fear in immigrant communities and undermine public safety for everyone. When people fear contact with law enforcement, they are less likely to report crimes, seek help, or cooperate as witnesses—even when they are victims.

In my own community in Columbia, people are panicking when they see black SUVs and men in unidentified black vests. It is creating real fear across my community. We should not have to live this way.

Programs like 287(g) have been associated with racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detention. They divert local resources away from protecting communities and instead entangle local agencies in federal deportation efforts that separate families and destabilize neighborhoods.

We know from the news reports that people who have not committed crimes or have committed minor crimes are being picked, detained and deported, including US citizens. Please do not let this continue in Maryland, outlaw programs like 287(g) in our state. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB 444.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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