

HB444
Favorable
Jane Tamagna

I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 444, prohibiting 287(g) agreements in the State of Maryland .

I write from personal experience, not things I've read or heard. I am a middle class white woman from Middletown, Maryland. I work as a business consultant and work, shop, and socialize on the Golden Mile, the Frederick district representing the largest part of Frederick's immigrant community. I have long term clients, friends, favorite shops, doctors, and employees from the district.

Here's what I know. These are long term tax paying residents of the County. They lead their children's PTAs, volunteer in the community, run businesses, and employ others. They spur economic growth in the County and contribute to our tax base. I know from hundreds of conversations that these important members of our community are afraid to – and in many cases have stopped - leaving their homes to take children to the school bus stop, go to work, go shopping, go to doctor's appointments, or leave their home for any reason because of the real and very present danger posed by ICE augmented by the Frederick 287(g) program. The community is in the most literal sense of the word, terrified.

And because of Frederick's 287(g) program, this community is also unwilling to call the police when they see crime because the responding officer is not just a Frederick County officer, but an ICE agent. A 911 call for a public safety emergency invites arrest and handover to ICE for an innocent caller.

If this seems unlikely to you, you are not hearing from or reaching out to the schools who deal with absent and traumatized children, shopkeepers who are closing doors because customers have stopped showing up, employers whose workers cannot safely leave their homes to come to work.

The lie that ICE is acting against criminals has always been and remains a dangerous lie. 73% of people detained by ICE have NO convictions; only 5% have violent convictions..many for lesser violations including traffic.

Our police officers should not be augmenting ICE. Our police officers should not be taking part in raids on churches, homes, businesses, or non-profits to round up people who are NOT criminals. Our police officers should not be the symbol of terror and violence to children and their parents.

I strongly urge you to support House bill 444. You cannot end ICE's presence in Maryland but you can assure that Maryland resources do not contribute to unwarranted, life threatening attacks on our immigrant (and non-immigrant) community.

Do what is in your power to end 287(g) in Maryland. Our community deserves better.

Respectfully,
Jane Tamagna