

# CHESAPEAKE PSR PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



**Committee:** Judiciary

**Testimony on:** **HB444** Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition-

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** January 27, 2026

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility is an organization of over 880 supporters, that was founded by physicians and which strongly supports **HB444**, a bill that will prohibit municipal, county, and state officials from entering into an agreement with Federal immigration enforcement agencies and will terminate current agreements.

Arresting fellow Marylanders, detaining them, deporting them, and too often, using unnecessary force without appropriate oversight, is a threat to all of us and we are obliged to support efforts to stop these **violations of human rights**.

Maryland citizens and immigrants married to American citizens in the process of establishing their legal status have been arrested and detained. In Salisbury, after delivering her 5 year-old child to kindergarten, a mother was swarmed by 7 ICE agents, extracted from her car, detained, and then sent to a Louisiana detention facility where she remains weeks later.<sup>1</sup> Her attorney is fighting to block her deportation to Honduras. Deep cuts in staffing have seriously undermined the Office of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and other Federal immigration detention offices mandated by Congress as watchdogs of DHS immigration practices. Replacing leadership with an advocate for dismantling these oversite agencies has occurred and, in the context of reports of inhumane conditions at detention centers including deaths, is a cause for alarm.<sup>2</sup>

Recent events in Minneapolis have convinced even those of us who had no reason to fear ICE and CBP in the past that we are not safe if we decide to protest peacefully what is happening to our neighbors.

People who are not Caucasian, especially those who speak with a Spanish accent, are increasingly terrorized and afraid to come out of their homes. CPSR supporters who are health care providers know that we cannot take care of our patients if they are afraid to come into our offices or hospital or clinics, if they are afraid to pick up their medicines at the pharmacy, if they are afraid to get important tests and procedures. Delay in care can lead a disease to be more

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.baltimoresun.com/2026/01/09/ice-denies-bond-salisbury-mother-parrazal/?clearUserState=true>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2025/07/08/politics/homeland-security-watchdog-cuts>

advanced and more difficult to treat. Delay can have an impact on a wide community if it involves infections. It can cause mental as well as physical harm, and children are especially vulnerable.<sup>3</sup>

A recent report by the Kaiser Family Foundation<sup>4</sup> reported how the fear of being apprehended, including fear of family separations, resulted in fewer immigrant families seeking health care and other related services to which they were entitled. This impacted even those with protected legal status and impacted behaviors even after more protective regulations were passed. Allowing our immigrant neighbors to attend to their medical needs and other fundamental activities that keep them healthy of mind as well as of body, will improve the lives of all of us who live in Maryland.

**Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility urges you to pass H444 and keep Marylanders of all different immigration statuses healthy and safe. Maryland officials should not be partnering at this time with an agency that is out of control, lacks oversight, and endangers the rights of all people including those who call Maryland their home.**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.healthbeat.org/newyork/2025/01/29/your-local-epidemiologist-ice-raids-effects-on-health/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/potential-impacts-of-mass-detention-and-deportation-efforts-on-the-health-and-well-being-of-immigrant-families/>