

**Testimony on HB444 - Favorable** Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements, Prohibition

January 27, 2026

House Judiciary Committee

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett and Members of the Committee,

As a member of the RISE Coalition of Western Maryland – Resources for Immigrant Support and Empowerment, I offer testimony in support of HB444 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements, Prohibition. RISE has been working since 2017 to end 287g in Frederick County. If you oppose the family separation nightmare of previous presidential administrations, your conscience should lead you to end 287g agreements in Maryland. I've learned from ESL teacher-friends of the heartbreak of students coming to school when one or both parents have been deported. In the current climate of ICE cruelty, it is more important than ever to say that "Maryland stands with families."

Sadly, over 2,200 people from Frederick County have been deported since 287g was initiated. 80% were accused (not even convicted) of minor offenses: traffic arrests, petty shoplifting, etc. THEY ARE NOT CRIMINALS. They care for their children, they participate in our churches, they are my friends and neighbors. It is heartbreaking to know that if they are pulled over for speeding (as I have been) that they could wind up being deported. Being undocumented is not a crime it's a civil violation. Most people agree that our immigration system is a terrible mess on the federal level. It was much simpler when my grandmother came through Ellis Island in early 1900's. She was fleeing extreme poverty in Eastern Europe. Now, for most folks, the legal hurdles are tremendous. Immigrants fleeing political turmoil, repression and life-threatening situations should not be penalized for Congress' failure to act. I have a friend from the Philippines who married an American woman. He is now a citizen. He's been trying to bring his sister here for 10 years!!

Maryland should uphold due process and disentangle immigration enforcement from the criminal justice system. Let those convicted of crimes serve their sentences. Don't separate them from their families. I appreciate the Committee's past support for a ban on 287g and urge a clean bill - no language that requires notification and/or transfer to ICE.

**Please issue a favorable report on HB444.**

Thank you

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