

My name is Janet Tupper and offer a **favorable testimony** in support of **HB 444 with a full ban on 287g agreements statewide.**

As a Garrett County resident, I am disappointed that Sheriff Bryson Meyers entered into a 287(g) agreement in 2024. While I appreciate the listening sessions with Sheriff Meyers where he explained his thoughtful consideration of adopting the 287g program as well as his assurances to refrain from engaging in racial profiling, he is an elected official. This leaves the county subject to subjective interpretations of a future county sheriff who may have a more aggressive stance.

There apparently have not been any immigrant referrals to this point, however, I am aware that there are residents in the community who feel very unsafe and fearful. I do not feel this is good for our community.

Garrett County is a rural part of the state, with the lowest percentages of minorities and the third lowest general population in Maryland. The few local people of color or those with accents already encounter overt racism from locals, and often feel nervous, unwelcome and unsafe (as reported in a 2023 Commissioner's Report Community Survey). Those who look or sound different (no matter what their legal status) have become potential targets, and understandably hesitant to draw further attention to themselves. **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. That makes everyone less safe.**

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. I do not want that to happen in Garrett County.

**I am encouraging you to vote in support of HB 444 – Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**

Sincerely,

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