



Maryland Chiefs of Police Association

Maryland Sheriffs' Association



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair and
Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Darren Popkin, Executive Director, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Andrea Mansfield, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee
Samira Jackson, Representative, MCPA-MSA Joint Legislative Committee

DATE: January 27, 2026

RE: **HB 444 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition**

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA) and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association (MSA) oppose House Bill 444, which would terminate existing federal 287(g) agreements and prohibit Maryland law enforcement agencies from entering into future agreements.

What 287(g) Programs ARE:

- **Deputized correctional officers determining the immigration status of individuals after they have already been charged with a crime, unrelated to their immigration status, and are in custody. If illegal status is confirmed, the officers may issue immigration detainers and notify ICE, which allows ICE to assume custody.**

Currently, eight Maryland counties have voluntarily entered into 287(g) agreements as a public safety tool to identify and remove individuals who have committed serious criminal offenses and who pose a threat to community safety. These agreements are entered into at the discretion of local jurisdictions after careful consideration of community needs, operational capacity, and public safety priorities.

Three counties—Frederick, Harford, and Cecil—participate in the **Jail Enforcement Model**. Under this model, deputized correctional officers may identify individuals charged with crimes to determine immigration status and issue immigration detainers. These detainers enable Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to assume custody of individuals who present a demonstrable risk to public safety, preventing their release back into the community.

Five additional jurisdictions—Allegany, Carroll, Garrett, St. Mary's, and Washington—participate in the **Warrant Service Officer** (WSO) Model, under which ICE trains, certifies, and authorizes selected state and local deputized correctional officers to execute ICE administrative warrants. This model is narrowly tailored and strictly limits authority to arrests within correctional facilities. It does not authorize officers to question individuals about immigration status or conduct enforcement activities in the community. The WSO model provides a controlled, secure framework that enhances coordination with federal authorities while maintaining clear operational boundaries.

Collectively, these agreements provide Maryland law enforcement agencies with critical tools to prevent individuals with serious criminal histories from re-entering Maryland communities and committing additional offenses.

House Bill 444 would require the termination of all 287(g) agreements statewide, despite the fact that participation in the program is entirely voluntary. Jurisdictions that have chosen to enter into 287(g) agreements have done so based on local conditions and the specific public safety needs of their communities. Conversely, jurisdictions that determine the program is not appropriate for their community already possess the authority to decline participation.

By mandating the elimination of all 287(g) agreements, HB 444 undermines local decision-making and imposes a one-size-fits-all approach that disregards the diversity of public safety challenges across Maryland's counties. The bill strips local governments of their ability to make informed, community-specific determinations regarding law enforcement tools they believe are necessary to protect public safety.

For these reasons, the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association and the Maryland Sheriffs' Association respectfully oppose House Bill 444 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report.