



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Judicial Proceedings Committee
3 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Nicole A. Williams
Judiciary Committee
207 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of Senate Bill 245/House Bill 444: Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition**

Dear Chair Smith and Chair Williams:

Across our country, across Maryland, and in Howard County, we have seen enforcement actions taken by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These actions have understandably raised questions about safety, responsibility, and the role of local government. As a result, I want to express my appreciation for your leadership and introduction of Senate Bill 245 and House Bill 444.

This legislation would prohibit the State, local government, or any agency, officer, employee, or agent of the state or local government from entering into an immigration enforcement agreement.

Some jurisdictions have entered into delegation agreements with the Federal Government through ICE's 287(g) program that would allow state and/or local jurisdictions to enforce federal Immigration Laws. Howard County does not participate and has never participated in ICE's 287(g) program. The Federal Government is responsible for enforcing federal immigration laws.

In 2020, the Howard County Council passed the Liberty Act with a supermajority. The law clearly prohibits the use of County resources for immigration enforcement unless it is required by federal or state law, an international treaty, or an existing intergovernmental service agreement. The Liberty Act also explicitly prohibits discrimination based on citizenship, nationality, or immigration status.

To be clear, Howard County Government, including the Howard County Police Department and Howard County Sheriff's Office, does not enforce federal immigration law and will not assist with immigration enforcement actions. That position is grounded in law and in our values as a community.

Our strength comes from people of different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences choosing to call this place home. I believe, deeply and unequivocally, that the civil rights of all our residents must be protected through the elimination of 287(g) programs across our State.

I again express my **support for SB245/HB444** and urge its successful passage.

Respectfully,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive