



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Wes Moore

February 17, 2026

Local Leaders,

Today, I signed SB 245/HB 444 into law. The bill prohibits State and local jurisdictions from deputizing their officers for federal immigration enforcement activity under the supervision of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (“ICE”) as part of the 287(g) program.

In recent weeks, we have seen in real time how federal immigration enforcement is failing to make our communities safer and follow the rule of law. We have also witnessed a deep lack of accountability from the federal government—their actions do not align with the Constitutional policing that we practice and honor in the State of Maryland.

I am equally troubled by the federal government’s lack of focus on violent offenders in its apparent pursuit of arbitrary immigration quotas—in Maryland, the majority of individuals arrested by ICE have never been convicted or even charged with a crime. Of those with convictions, most have been for minor offenses.

Public safety is, has been, and will continue to be my top priority. Therefore, I want to be clear:

- SB 245/HB 444 does not prevent the State or localities from continuing to work with the federal government on our shared public safety priorities, including the removal of non-citizen offenders who pose a risk to public safety;
- Nothing about the law changes your ability to work with the federal government on criminal investigations and joint task forces unrelated to civil immigration enforcement, nor does the law authorize or require the release of dangerous criminals;
- The law does not prevent localities from continuing to notify ICE about the impending release of an individual of interest from local custody or coordinating the safe transfer of custody within constitutional limits; and

Anyone who is charged with a crime under State law must go through the State criminal process and, if convicted, must serve their sentence.

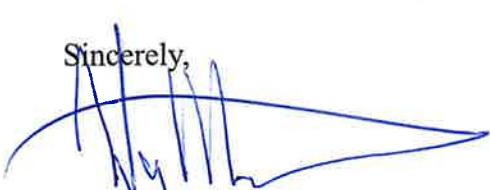
I have directed Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services Secretary Carolyn Scruggs to continue its lawful coordination with ICE on the removal of public safety threats and I encourage each of you to do the same with your personnel.

Please contact Deputy Chief of Staff Travis Nelson at travis.nelson1@maryland.gov with any questions.

Thanks to your collective effort and sacrifice, Maryland continues to experience one of the fastest drops in violent crime in the entire country. We are committed to continuing that progress as we uphold the rule of law and defend the Constitution.

I look forward to continuing our work together to make Maryland safer.

Sincerely,



Wes Moore

Governor of the State of Maryland