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SHERIFF

HARFORD COUNTY **Senate Bill 197 and 332 - Support** SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Correctional Facilities – Individual Subject to Immigration Detainer Homeland Security Notification

Written Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee

January 30, 2020

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I write today in support of Senate Bill 197 and 332 which support public safety through a cooperative relationship with our Federal partners at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Since 2016, my Agency has partnered with the DHS to participate in the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) 287(g) Delegation of Authority Program. This participation comes in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed between ICE and local agencies that permits correctional deputies, once trained by ICE, to perform certain immigration enforcement functions.

Over the three year period that we have participated in the 287(g) Program, we have successfully identified and turned over more than 130 individuals who were not residents of the United States and had also committed crimes against our citizens. Returning these who committed crimes against our state, back into our community to further victimize our citizens is certainly not an effective strategy to reduce crime and keep law abiding citizens safe.

Clearly, I believe the 287(g) Program is in the best interest of public safety and is a solid crime reduction strategy. I also believe it is imperative for jurisdictions who do not participate in the 287(g) program to work collaboratively with their federal partners to identify and remove individuals who commit crimes and are wanted by the DHS. Using this collaborative approach with all of our federal partners is one of the reasons crime has decreased by 31% in Harford County over the last five years. In fact, violent crime has decreased by 41% and property crimes have decreased by 29% during this period.

SB 197 and 332 will ensure detention facilities across the State communicate with the DHS to provide them with valuable information about criminals, thus allowing more individuals that have committed crimes and are not United States citizens the ability to no longer reside in our Country and enjoy the freedoms and benefits of our great nation. This legislation will send a loud and clear message that Maryland is not a Sanctuary State.

As Sheriff of Harford County, I would respectfully ask the members of the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 197 and 332.

Jeffrey R. Gahler
Sheriff