

January 13, 2026

Clifford S. Fishman, Silver Spring, MD 20906

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF EXPEDITED BILL 35-25**  
**Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act**

**TO:** Council President Fani-González, Vice President Balcombe, and members of the County Council

**FROM:** Clifford S. Fishman

I live in Leisure World in Silver Spring (District 5). I have lived in Montgomery County since 1977, and am an active member (and past-president) of Tikvat Israel Congregation in Rockville. I am writing in support of **Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust – Immigrant Protections Act** on three general grounds: personal, religious, and practical.

When I look at this generation's immigrants, I see my grandparents. Today's immigrants come from different countries and have different religions and languages and skin colors than my grandparents did, but they come here for the same reasons: to escape discrimination or grinding poverty or both. They had little education. Each took low-paying "scut work" while they learned English and learned what it means to be an American. My grandparents proudly became American citizens, and passed their love of our country to their children. Their children did better, and their grandchildren went to college and graduate school. You must now decide whether to help assure today's immigrants have decent chance to realize those same hopes and dreams, or to make that difficult or impossible.

The passage of this bill is also a religious imperative. In the very heart of the Torah's holiness code, Leviticus 19:33-34 demands: "When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I the Lord am your God." Nor is this command a one-off; the Torah insists on protecting and helping strangers *thirty-six times*.

Finally, there is a very practical reason to support Expedited Bill 35-25. Many immigrants in Montgomery County do jobs that have no prestige and low pay but that make life better for all of us. Many of them stock grocery shelves, wash dishes and bus tables, clean our schools and hospitals. Many work as home personal aides or companions for the elderly and disabled. Many help harvest our food or provide unskilled labor that helps build and repair our roads and other infrastructure. Without them, our lives would be less healthy, less productive, and less convenient, and our economy would suffer.

We must insist on due process, equal protection under the law, and humane and sympathetic treatment for all of our neighbors, regardless of their immigration status. And we must, to the extent legally permissible, prevent county officials from assisting ICE when it sweeps up dozens or hundreds of people merely because of their appearance or accent.

I respectfully urge the Council to pass Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust, quickly and without any weakening amendments.