

January 12, 2026

Devorah Berman

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF EXPEDITED BILL 35025
Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act

TO: Council President Fani-Gonzalez, Vice President Balcombe, and members of the County Council.

FROM: Devorah Berman

My name is Devorah Berman. I am a resident of Bethesda in District 1. I am submitting this testimony in support of Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act.

Thank you Council President Fani-Gonzalez for your leadership in this legislation. I would also like to thank the other Councilmembers for being bill sponsors. I have been a Montgomery County community member since 2001. I belong to both Beth El Synagogue and B'nai Tzedek Synagogue. As a first generation American, this bill is important to me. I have seen the contribution my mother and grandparents made to this country as immigrants. As a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, I understand how important it is for countries to offer safety and security to immigrants who have made it into our country. My mother couldn't practice her religion under communism. My grandfather's uncle was shot before him. My grandma was threatened and interrogated. And all of this was in addition to the horrors of living through World War II. People don't leave their country of origin unless the situation demands it.

I am seeing first hand the destruction of families in local neighborhoods. I coach a running team that practices at the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy track in Aspen Hill. Down the street from the school, a young man is now the sole provider for his three younger siblings, because his mother was taken and sent to a detention center. My son is the same age as this young man, yet my son is working at college classes, not working to keep his family together. It's possible this boy's mother may not be allowed to return, even though her children are citizens and have social security numbers. They could be evicted without her income to pay rent. Removing this mom only harms future generations and strains resources. Children should not be raising other children in our county. If we could protect our citizens, especially mothers like this who worked, paid rent, and dutifully went to immigration checks, we would improve the classroom experience in our schools and employment in our local businesses. How can children learn when they lose a parent? How many teachers and counselors in our schools are now focusing on crisis management instead of teaching or supporting educational growth?

This bill will increase the safety of our families and ensure that children have parents caring for them in their homes. **I urge the Council to pass Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust, quickly and without any weakening amendments.**