

Michael Marciarille DeLong
January 9th, 2026

Testimony in Support of Expedited Bill 35-25: Promoting Community Trust–Immigrant Protection Act

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

My name is Michael DeLong and I am a resident of Silver Spring, living in District 4. I strongly urge you to vote in favor of Expedited Bill 25-25, Promoting Community Trust–Immigration Protections Act without delay. Immigrants living in Montgomery County should be protected against unfair and cruel treatment and be able to reside in and use county services without fear or discrimination.

I am a member of Temple Shalom, a Reform Jewish synagogue in Chevy Chase, and I have worked with my synagogue to sponsor two refugee families in recent years. We are guided by Exodus 23:9, which says “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.” My synagogue first raised funds to help an Afghan refugee family settle in the United States to avoid persecution by the Iranian government, which started deporting refugees back to Afghanistan where the Taliban would have killed them. Last year we began helping a Russian Jewish refugee family, who is seeking asylum, after the Trump administration cut off their aid. We are joining a long history of welcoming the stranger –from those escaping anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe to refuseniks from the Soviet Union and refugees from Central America and Venezuela. I am quite proud of our work and that Montgomery County has welcomed them.

But currently immigrants in Maryland, who have been through similarly dire circumstances as these families, are being terrorized and discriminated against by Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement (ICE). Under the direction of Stephen Miller, this agency is abducting immigrants without due process, abusing them and holding them in substandard prisons, denying them access to lawyers, and deporting them to third countries where they have never been! Families are being torn apart and people who have lived in the United States for decades, who are often pillars of their communities, are being kidnapped. As a result, many people are terrified to leave their homes, to go to work, to pick their children up from school, or to get help when they need it.

The Torah commands us thirty-six times to consider the stranger. According to Deuteronomy 16:20: “Justice, justice you shall pursue, so that you may thrive and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

The Trust Act will protect immigrants in Montgomery County and counter the illegal abuses of ICE. It puts in place strong civil rights protections by banning county employees from requesting or investigating a person’s immigration status unless required by law. The bill further bans intimidation and discrimination against someone based on their immigration status and guarantees that county services and opportunities aren’t denied to someone because they are undocumented. Finally, the Trust Act limits the use of county resources in federal civil immigration enforcement, making sure that staff, equipment, and county buildings aren’t used to help ICE without a valid judicial warrant or an actual criminal law enforcement purpose.

No one should be afraid of using their local library or getting housing assistance or going to public school because of their immigration status. The Trust Act will protect immigrants in our county and make them feel safer, enabling them to get the help they need and live flourishing lives. Immigrants strengthen our home and are our colleagues, neighbors, friends, and family. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. said that “non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as cooperation with good,” and elected officials should heed his words. Our Reform Jewish synagogue has declared itself a sanctuary for those unjustly facing deportation and Montgomery County should do its part in being a sanctuary, beginning by passing the Trust Act.

Thank you to Council President Fani-Gonzalez for her leadership on this issue and to the other Councilmembers for cosponsoring this bill. **I urge you to pass Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust, quickly and without any weakening amendments.**