

January 8, 2026

William Luther Jett

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: William Luther Jett

OPENING: My name is William Luther Jett. I am a resident of Washington Grove in District Three. I am submitting this testimony in support of Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust – Immigrant Protections Act.

Thank you, Council President Fani-González for your leadership on this legislation and thanks to all for being bill sponsors. I am a near lifelong resident of Montgomery County, and a former special education teacher with Montgomery County Public Schools. I am also a writer, a musician and singer/songwriter. I belong to the Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation, and I come to this issue grounded in my moral values as a Jew and as a human being.

I want to tell you about the man who takes care of my yard, Señor R. He is an American citizen and is putting his daughter through college. She was born here. Señor R. has worked with me for nearly two decades. He has always been conscientious and reliable.

This fall, I noticed that he and his crew were coming by to rake the leaves and clean the yard less frequently than in past autumns. I suspected why. It has become more risky for lawn crews and itinerant gardeners, many of whom are Latino/Latina, to be out and about. I.C.E. has been setting up checkpoints, even here in Montgomery County, and pulling people over who look “foreign”. People who look like Señor R. and his crew.

In December, Señor R. came by to gather up the leaves in my yard and arrange them in neat windrows for the town’s contractors to pick up. He told me this would be their last visit for the season. “Things are crazy out there,” he said. I understood.

Good people like Señor R. need to feel safe on our streets. This is their home, too. They are not just gardeners and leaf rakers. They work in our shops, in our restaurants, in our hospitals and medical offices, in our schools and day-cares. Many are professionals — teachers, doctors, managers. They are all part of the fibre of our vibrant and diverse community. No, they are not all day labourers, but what if they were? Are they still not human beings, who deserve dignity, respect, and liberty?

Señor R. and his colleagues should not have to live in fear. Nobody should. Not in my County. Not on our watch. **That is why I urge the Council to pass Expedited Bill 35-25, Promoting Community Trust, quickly and without any weakening amendments.**

Thank you.