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**Testimony in Support of HB1222 with Amendments
HB 1222- Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement (Maryland Values Act)**

TO: Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Carol Stern

I am testifying in favor of HB1222 with amendments as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Synagogue.

My sacred text and tradition teach us to welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34 explicitly instructs us to treat the immigrant in our land the same as native citizens. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote "teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our immigration justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

At its core, this bill is about upholding Maryland's values—fairness, dignity, and justice for all. The Maryland Values Act affirms that our state should not be in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or funneling state and local resources into a federal deportation agenda. Instead, Maryland should stand firm in its commitment to community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law - by ending 287(g).

The 287(g) program has a well-documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detentions. It diverts local law enforcement from their primary duty of protecting public safety, forcing them to act as immigration agents rather than community protectors. This erodes trust, particularly among immigrant communities, making people less likely to report crimes or seek help when needed. Ending 287(g) ensures Maryland's resources are used to foster public safety—not help the federal deportation agenda.

As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, along with CASA, **I support a clean bill that removes the amendments added to the bill in the Judiciary Committee that require notification and transfer to ICE.** The sole purpose of this legislation is to end 287(g) agreements in Maryland, not to create or mandate new forms of collaboration with ICE. Local jurisdictions already have the discretion to engage with ICE if they choose; ending 287(g) agreements does not limit that existing authority. **I strongly support a clean bill that aligns with the original intentions of the legislation - to simply terminate 287(g) agreements in Maryland.** This is what will bring Maryland closer to our values.

I respectfully urge a favorable report for HB1222 with amendments.