



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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February 25, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr., Chair
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0346:** Civil Actions – Violations of Constitutional Rights (No Kings Act)

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of **Senate Bill 0346**, which would establish civil liability for a federal law enforcement officer, who, under color of law, deprives another of a right, a privilege, or an immunity secured by the United States Constitution. In recent months, this issue has taken on a new urgency as individuals are encountering what can be interpreted as unconstitutional abuses of federal power. And as immigration enforcement and detention expands, significant encounters with federal law enforcement officials may become even more commonplace.

No matter what agency they serve, accountability to our United States Constitution should be upheld by any government officer-federal, state, or local. This legislation, which allows victims meaningful recourse in the case of a violation of their inalienable rights, is an essential step in closing a dangerous loophole that leaves our residents vulnerable to unconstitutional abuses perpetrated by federal officers. While this bill rightly retains protection for officers when acting with lawful federal authority, it recognizes that accountability is crucial in maintaining public trust, and that actions that violate core rights protected by the Constitution can never be lawful.

This legislation also offers a potential pathway for pursuing compensation for our most vulnerable neighbors, those whom we have seen increasingly targeted by federal law enforcement officers due to their perceived race, ethnicity, or national origin. It also protects those for whom a violation of their civil liberties which leads to arrest or detainment could incur financial consequences that could have catastrophic impacts on their lives and families. For those in the nearly 15% of households in Howard County which maintain an annual median income of under \$50,000, a disruption of this nature could carry the potential for lost wages, lost jobs, or other lasting consequences which threaten the continued stability of our residents, neighborhoods, and communities.

I again urge the Committee's support for **SB 346**, which enshrines a path to justice for Maryland residents who experience willful violations of their constitutional rights.

Respectfully,

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