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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB304
State and Local Government – Participation in Federal Immigration Enforcement

My name is Phyllis Oresky, and I have been a Maryland resident for 61 years, in District 22 for four of them. I am writing to you today in support of HB304.

On a personal note, my grandparents came to this country from Europe as immigrants, and my Jewish faith teaches me to “love your neighbor as yourself” and to treat every human being with respect and dignity, regardless of their country of origin. Unfortunately, these values are not universally practiced in this country at this time, as immigrant families are being torn apart, and as productive members of society are being incarcerated instead of being allowed to contribute to our communities, their families, and to the economy. ICE is being utilized by the federal government to detain and separate people, and states are profiting from contracting out beds for ICE detainees.

I am a member of Mishkan Torah Synagogue in Greenbelt, and a core team member of Bend the Arc Prince George’s County Minyan, and we work to better the lives of all Americans and all Marylanders, no matter what their race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or place of birth. No one in this country and in our wonderful state of Maryland should be fearful of the police, even if they are not a citizen, and unfortunately too many immigrants are worried that they might be separated from their families, jailed, and even deported should they be stopped by law enforcement. People everywhere just want to be safe and have an opportunity to make a better life for themselves and for their children.

By passing HB304, the Trust Act, and choosing to end police cooperation with ICE, immigrants, Muslims and other minorities would finally feel safe and not targeted and restore much needed trust.

I urge you to support HB304 and respectfully urge a favorable report on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Oresky