

Chris Patterson

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 977
Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 19, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee. My name is Chris Patterson, and I am a parent, educator, member of the Baltimore AROS table and a board member of Baltimore City Parent Community Advisory Board. I am submitting this testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 977.

SB 977 would protect Maryland residents by preventing federal immigration enforcement from accessing personal information, data systems, and facilities without a valid warrant. This legislation is essential to ensuring that all members of our community feel safe when interacting with schools, hospitals, and public institutions.

As an educator who works closely with immigrant students and their families, I have seen how the fear of immigration enforcement affects individuals and families in our community. Parents have resorted to shutting themselves in, resulting in students not attending school, parents feeling hesitant to seek help when they need it, and ultimately families feeling unsafe and extremely vulnerable.

The United States has long been a nation built by immigrants—people who came here seeking safety, opportunity, and a better life for themselves and their children. Yet, aggressive immigration enforcement practices, often rooted in racist and xenophobic ideologies, disproportionately target Black, Brown, and immigrant communities. These practices create fear and instability, weakening the social fabric that binds our communities together.

Maryland's immigrant residents are our neighbors, colleagues, and friends. They contribute to the state's economy, culture, and overall well-being. They deserve to live their lives—whether dropping their children off at school, attending a doctor's appointment, or simply going to work—without the constant fear of being targeted by immigration enforcement.

Passing SB 977 will send a clear message: Maryland is a state that protects its residents' privacy, upholds the rule of law, and ensures that all community members can live, learn, and thrive in safety. I urge you to vote **yes** on Senate Bill 977 and issue a favorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Chris Patterson
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