

# BREAKING: Judge Blocks ICE Enforcement In Houses of Worship

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*Democracy Forward Filed Suit on Behalf of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Gurdwara Sahib West Sacramento, Six Quaker Yearly Meetings*

*Court's Order Blocks Enforcement In Plaintiffs' Houses of Worship*

**Greenbelt, Maryland** – Today, the U.S. District Court of Maryland **issued an order** blocking the Trump administration's policy that enables immigration officials to enter houses of worship indiscriminately to conduct immigration enforcement operations. The order, which outlines the ways in which the Trump administration policy is likely to violate religious freedom and expression rights, applies to Plaintiffs' houses of worship.

The ruling came in response to a suit filed by Democracy Forward on behalf of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which consists of 1,400 churches in the Baptist denomination serving an estimated 750,000 individual Baptists, the Gurdwara Sahib West Sacramento, which serves 30,000 Sikhs, and six Quaker Meetings – the New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, Adelphi Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, and Richmond Friends Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.

"For decades, the government has recognized that everyone – no matter their immigration status – should be able to attend houses of worship without fear of a warrantless government raid. Religious institutions should not have to go to court to fight for the right to worship and associate freely that is enshrined in our Constitution," **said Skye Perryman, President and CEO of Democracy Forward**. "Our plaintiffs represent a unique and diverse coalition of religious groups that have been at the forefront in protecting values of religious liberty for centuries. We are grateful to the court for acting to limit this unlawful and harmful policy."

"Today's ruling is a powerful affirmation of the values that have defined the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship—a steadfast commitment to religious liberty, local church autonomy, and the clear separation of church and state. For decades, our congregations have faithfully engaged in ministry among immigrants and refugees, offering a bold and courageous witness to the remarkable and relentless love of Christ. This decision affirms our effort to restore the sensitive location protections that have allowed our congregations to worship and minister freely. While our work continues, we celebrate this victory as a testament to the bold faith that rises from freedom rather than coercion," said **Rev. Dr. Paul Baxley, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship**.

"The Court has taken an important first step today to protect freedom of religion for Sikhs and all people of faith to worship without the threat of arbitrary immigration enforcement and

surveillance. We stand with Democracy Forward and all of our allies in faith working towards a final determination that our Sangat and congregations across the nation may exercise their first amendment rights as intended by the founders of this great nation," said **Amar Shergill, Board Member, Gurdwara Sahib West Sacramento.**

"New York Yearly Meeting is grateful this injunction has been granted and that people who wish to worship with us can once again do so without fear of harassment or arrest by immigration agents. This injunction rightly reaffirms the constitutionally protected separation between church and state. We hope that all religious congregations will soon be granted similar relief," said **Steve Mohlke, General Secretary of New York Yearly Meeting.**

"For over 300 years, Quakers have been committed to the fundamental right of anyone and everyone to worship freely. Nobody should be afraid of attending a Quaker Meeting or any other house of worship. We are grateful that the court's decision reflects the importance of these core rights and will not let the government infringe upon them," said **Sarah Gillooly, General Secretary of Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends.**

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"Our country is strengthened by people of faith who love their neighbors, no exceptions. Today's ruling returns some of us to safely holding open the doors to houses of worship to all seekers, as our constitution guarantees. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting looks forward to the next step of removing the barrier of fear for all congregations," said **Christie Duncan-Tessmer, General Secretary of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.**

The complaint is available here. The motion for a Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction was filed on February 4, 2025, and is available here.

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