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TESTIMONY ON - FAVORABLE HB1006

Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

TO: Chair Clippinger and Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern, and I am testifying in favor of, as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

Our 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.

No one should hesitate to seek life-saving care or attend school due to fear of immigration enforcement. This act establishes clear guidelines restricting ICE access to sensitive locations, including schools, courthouses, hospitals, places of worship, and other vital spaces. However, as of January 20, 2025, the revocation of these protections has left immigrant communities vulnerable to enforcement actions in spaces where they should feel safe.

It appears that the Executive Order issued on January 20, 2025 was so broad that places that are no longer protected also include: Crisis and/or drop-in centers, Homeless shelters, Domestic violence shelters and/or victims' services centers, Food banks and/or pantries. Community-based organizations, Places where children gather (including playgrounds, child care centers, or group homes for children) and Disaster/emergency response sites, and areas "near" these places, such as sidewalks, entrances, and parking lots.

The State of Maryland must take a stand and do everything it can to protect our immigrant residents, who pay taxes, work hard for our communities, and are a vibrant part of our society. **I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB1006.**