*Testimony in support of **HB 1006 - Protecting Sensitive Locations Act; HB 1431 - Maryland Data Privacy Act; and HB 1222 - Maryland Values Act**

Good afternoon. My name is Vincent Tola. I am an ESOL teacher in Baltimore City Public Schools. I live in Baltimore's Highlandtown, district 46.

I am here today to support HB 1006, protecting sensitive locations, HB 1431, Maryland Data Privacy and HB 1222, the Maryland Values Act.

Taken together, these bills will do much to protect Maryland residents from abuse by the federal government, and will make Maryland stronger, IMO.

*As you know, President Trump has rescinded the guidance that instructed ICE not to carry out immigration enforcement at sensitive locations. So now, schools, hospitals and places of worship are not necessarily safe places for children, for my students, my neighbors, my coworkers. Every time I hear "mass deportation," I know that my community and the people who I care about are under threat.   … The fear and anxiety is real. … Now, thus far, ICE has not shown up at my schools, but we fully expect them to come.

- I am aware that HB 1006 merely instructs the Attorney General to produce guidelines that Maryland agencies would be encouraged to follow. … So, it won't stop ICE from showing up at my school. I am aware of that… But, I think it's the best we can do in the state of Maryland.

- What's also very significant is protecting the privacy of Maryland residents in our state databases. What HB 1431 does is say, "ICE, we're not going to help you come after our residents." I think, by and large, Maryland residents are not on board with ripping families apart. We oppose Trump's mass deportation agenda. I know I do. So, let's pass the Maryland Data Privacy Act, and say to my students, my coworkers, my community, we're not on board with this, and we're going to be helping ICE to round up, frankly, our hard-working neighbors, friends, fellow parishioners, and their kids.

- Finally, I agree with CASA that we should end all 287(g) agreements in the state of Maryland, and prevent any new partnerships between our local law enforcement and

ICE. There are multiple reasons why this is good policy. Please listen to advocates such as CASA on why HB 1222 is right for Maryland.

*With my remaining time, I'd like to respond to what some people in Maryland may say in regards to this legislation.

- That we cannot "reward illegal behavior."
- That these bills are justing protecting criminal aliens.
- That mass deportation is needed in response to Biden's open borders policies.
- That these are "sanctuary" laws that will bring more illegal aliens to MD.

This is what I would want to point out:

- We know, as Americans, how vital and integral immigration has been to our nation and our national character. The day that people from other countries stop wanting to migrate to the United States will be **a sad and problematic day** for our nation. It's important to be welcoming to immigrants.

- Part of the reason why we have so many undocumented Americans is the failure of the American political system. Decades ago, we should have opened up pathways for people to gain legal status, but I haven't heard the phrase, "comprehensive immigration reform" in years.

- Most of the people who are undocumented surely would have gone through a legal process had that option been viable. We should be giving people viable options … And let's remember that immigrants are filling vital roles in our country. They're filling vacancies that are difficult to fill. They're spending money, paying taxes and creating the need for complementary jobs. They're learning English and raising kids who could be future nurses, doctors, lawyers, business entrepreneurs, IT workers, construction workers, plumbers, steam fitters. They're adding to our nation, not subtracting from it. We know that.

- We also know that there are global factors that push people out of their home countries and pull them toward the United States. Climate change, economic conditions, wars and violence, crime and gangs, poverty. These are the factors that push people to

migrate.   How many of us can blame others for seeking a better life?

So, here's some good national policy … (And I know it seems like we're far away from good national policy, but these are times of rapid change). So, let's talk a little bit about good policy.

- **Widen the gates.** We need more opportunities for migrants to legally migrate to the United States.

* With that, I agree that we do need a border, and we need to enforce that border. We should dissuade people from migrating illegally into the United States, but we need to provide more legal options for folks. The trick is to get to healthy levels of legal immigration. I think we can get there.

- And we need to create pathways to a legal status for the majority of our undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States.

Why should we get rid of good people? … Why should we rip families apart? … You know, if someone is a violent criminal, that person should be in jail. … And what we know is that immigrants, including illegal immigrants, commit violent crimes at a far lower rate that native-born Americans. Plain and simple.

… The whole concept of mass deportation is wrong. It's bad policy. It's wrong for our country. And now, it's forcing us teachers to look our students in their eyes, and say, "Okay, it's time to learn … You might not be safe here. Our government might come here today to deport some of us … but let's try to learn anyway."

It's not good. We need to do something about it.

Sincerely,

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