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ADVANCING JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY SOLUTIONS

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Date: January 20, 2026

Re: SB 245

Position: FAVORABLE

STATEMENT OF MAJOR STANFORD “NEILL” FRANKLIN, [i] Maryland State Police (Ret.) ON BEHALF OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTION PARTNERSHIP [ii]

SUBMITTED TO
THE MARYLAND SENATE
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE
HON. WILLIAM C. SMITH, JR., CHAIR
HON. JEFF WALDSTREICHER, VICE CHAIR

Testimony - Favorable SB 245 - Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Distinguished Representatives, on behalf of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP), we support SB 245 and urge you to give it a favorable report because it will:

- Be effective in saving lives;
- Be effective in reducing violent crime;
- Be effective in reducing the strain upon limited law enforcement resources;
- Encourage victims of violent crime to seek law enforcement assistance; and
- Assist law enforcement in identifying, arresting and removing violent actors from the community.

LEAP greatly appreciates the courageous leadership shown in introducing this bill, which benefits not only immigrant communities, but all of our communities.

Successful investigations into violent crime require many things, but one extremely important component is witness and victim cooperation. Before a crime can even be investigated, we, the police, need to know that the crime has been committed. Whether a robbery, home invasion, rape, incident of domestic violence, or human trafficking, someone needs to report it. If a victim or witness of a crime is too fearful to come to the authorities to report a crime, the investigation never occurs, leaving the culprit to continue preying upon the same victim and others. As a result, when a crime is not reported, not only is the victim still at risk, but also so are other members of the community, both immigrant and otherwise.

The authorities (police and others in government) must be seen as friends of, and not threats to, the law-abiding immigrant community. SB 245 will not only help ensure that a high level of trust is maintained between the police and the immigrant community, it will also help departments focus their limited resources upon the violent criminals within our communities.

For example in 2011 I volunteered my time and expertise to the University of Maryland School of Law for an immigration case they were assisting with. Four members of the Baltimore immigrant community had been illegally detained and turned over to ICE by a Maryland Transportation Authority police officer. Three of the men were in a disabled vehicle and the fourth was called to assist. The men had committed no traffic violations and had no criminal records, yet they were detained, handcuffed, and eventually transported to the downtown Baltimore ICE office where they were turned over to federal authorities. This detention of non-violent immigrant community members took three police officers off our streets for a combined total of ten man hours, resulting in no increased safety for Marylanders.

Furthermore, the complexities of federal immigration law can lead to the inadvertent detention of U.S. citizens, resulting in expensive lawsuits for Maryland jurisdictions and taxpayers. As we know, many U.S. citizens speak imperfect English, and citizens are not required to carry identification. Citizens are also not required to identify themselves to law enforcement if there is no articulable suspicion that they have committed a crime. You don't need much of an imagination to see where this can lead when a police officer thinks that someone they engage on the street is in the country illegally.

On July 7, 2018, Sara Medrano was driving with her daughter and grandchildren when two deputies stopped her, purportedly for a broken taillight, and questioned where she was from and what her immigration status was. Then the deputies unlawfully tried to hold her for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in violation of the Fourth Amendment. When Ms. Medrano finally returned home, she realized that her taillight was working just fine and that the deputies, in fact, may have stopped her illegally.

We must have policies that encourage all victims of crime to step forward and report those crimes. At the same time, we must also have policies that enable us to properly deal with those who prey upon vulnerable members of society and not squander valuable law enforcement resources. SB 245 will do all the above, therefore, I ask that you give it a favorable report.

Respectfully,



Major Stanford “Neill” Franklin (Ret.)

[i] Major Neill Franklin (Ret.) is a distinguished figure in law enforcement, boasting a remarkable 34-year career that includes notable positions within both the Maryland State Police and the Baltimore Police Department. Franklin's extensive service began with the Maryland State Police, where he dedicated 23 years of his life to public safety. His exceptional performance led him to be selected in 2000 by the Commissioner of the Baltimore Police Department to reconstruct and lead the Education and Training Section in Baltimore.

Throughout his tenure with the Maryland State Police, Franklin made significant contributions, notably serving as the commander of the Education and Training Division and the Bureau of Drug and Criminal Enforcement. He was instrumental in the creation and oversight of the first Domestic Violence Investigative Units for the Maryland State Police, showcasing his commitment to progressive policing practices.

Franklin's perspective on the War on Drugs was profoundly shaped by the community impacts he witnessed during his career. Influenced by former Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke, who famously criticized the drug war's violent repercussions, Franklin became a staunch advocate for reform. This commitment was further fueled by the heartbreaking loss of his close friend, Maryland State Police Corporal Ed Toatley, who was killed during an undercover drug operation. This tragedy solidified his resolve to challenge and change ineffective drug policies.

In 2010, Franklin transitioned from active duty to become the Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Action Partnership, a role he held for a decade until his retirement in 2020. Under his guidance, the organization worked towards making the criminal justice system more fair and effective.

Franklin's expertise in policing has also been recognized in judicial settings, where he has served as an expert witness in both Maryland Circuit and federal district courts. His commitment to community engagement and reform extends beyond his professional duties; he has held positions on various boards, including the Youth & Police Initiative, the Alliance for Safety and Justice, the National Organization of Retired State Troopers, the Faith Based Community Council on Law Enforcement and Intelligence, and TurnAround Inc., among others.

Through his extensive service and advocacy, Major Neill Franklin has made a lasting impact on law enforcement practices and community safety initiatives, demonstrating a profound commitment to justice and reform.

[ii] The Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEA) is a nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety and working toward healing police-community relations.