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TESTIMONY ON SB0245 POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Toby Ditz

My name is Toby Ditz, and I have lived in Baltimore City's District 40 for over nearly forty years. This testimony is in support **of SB 0245**.

I am deeply committed to this legislation partly because I am the grandchild of Jewish immigrants. Our tradition teaches that we must welcome the stranger as neighbors and as equals. Jews have had to flee many times in our history. In my family, my maternal grandmother, Helen, escaped in 1919 from Russia in the midst of civil war and in the company of her mother and older sister; they fled across the rapidly closing Polish border to Amsterdam and then entered the US through Ellis Island. Had they tried to come here only ten years later, after US immigration policy choked off the flow of immigrants from Eastern Europe, I would not be here.

The gates of immigration once again opened after 1965, but instead of "welcoming the stranger," we are now in an era of massive backlash. President Trump's aggressive deployment of federal law enforcement officers is so indiscriminate, so violent, and so lawless that it shocks the conscience. As events in Minnesota show, they threaten the very lives of citizens and protesters as well as immigrants.

These enforcement operations are gradually but steadily increasing in our state. Maryland must now do all that it lawfully can to avoid cooperating with ICE and other federal agents. SB0245 will help protect all residents. In the end, local law enforcement officers will also be better off. According to the Maryland Attorney General's guidelines, even when local police and sheriffs enter into agreements with federal agencies, they must follow Maryland law—for

example, our strict standards for use of force and body cameras. Local law enforcement officers deputized by ICE or other federal agencies will inevitably face dilemmas as to whose policies to follow. In Maryland, we have worked hard to reform police practices, to bolster unbiased, constitutional policing. Agreements with federal agencies to enforce civil immigration law are a huge step backward for our state and make our law officers complicit in lawless federal overreach.

Let us welcome the stranger. Let us protect all of Marylanders against thuggery in the guise of federal law enforcement. **I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB0245.**