

SB0245_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON SB#0245 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ SB#/0245, Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

This bill has become vitally necessary in a climate in which the Federal Government has shown its total disrespect for the law and the Constitution by the Department of Homeland Security and ICE. The bill addresses this problem by prohibiting the State, a unit of local government, a county sheriff, or any agency, officer, employee, or agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into an immigration enforcement agreement; and requiring the termination of an existing immigration enforcement agreement on or before July 1, 2026.

My Jewish faith commands me to view immigrants positively. Leviticus 19:33-34 states “When strangers reside with you in your land, you shall not wrong them. The strangers who reside with you shall be to you as your citizens; you shall love each one as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I יְהִי am your G-d.”

Some Maryland jurisdictions have added immigration responsibilities by participating in the 287(g) Immigration program. The program has been costly for localities, has historically targeted individuals with little or no criminal history, and has harmed the relationship between police and local communities.

This legislation protects our immigrants who may have committed the civil infraction of being undocumented by prohibiting the State, a unit of local government, a county sheriff, or any agency, officer, employee, or agent of the State or a unit of local government from entering into a certain immigration enforcement agreement that treats them as criminals absent any criminal conduct. It helps counteract the fear and intimidation that is poisoning the relationship between police and the people they are supposed to serve. 287(g) encourages racial profiling to move people who may not have even been indicted into custody of ICE. It destroys families and communities.

This legislation is a moral imperative so that nobody, regardless of their immigration status, lives in fear of deportation or family separation when they seek to participate fully in our society. Immigrants, documented or not, are a positive and not a negative and must be treated as such.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0245.