

Testimony on SB 985 – FAVORABLE
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 12, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

My name is Marcia Greenberg, and I live in Lexington Park in St Mary's County. I am submitting testimony **in FAVOR OF SB 985**, supporting all efforts to ensure that innocent people who may be rounded up and abducted by ICE in the State of Maryland, or nearby states, will be held only in immigration detention facilities that are properly maintained – with safety and health standards.

In St Mary's County, we have not yet seen ICE agents swarming our streets. But we know that such aggressive targeting could happen at any time. They could come here to detain individuals who have done nothing more than to flee violent and repressive conditions in their home countries, to seek a safe life for their families, to work hard for economic opportunity for their children, and to contribute to a civil society. Many, if not most, are church-going. Most are working hard to put food on the table – and consequently contribute to our local economy and to social security. Many support and serve our local community as employees in hotels and restaurants, in hospitals and clinics, in yard care and in many other jobs. They are the kinds of people who this country has sometimes welcomed with open arms, but has at other times (like currently), stigmatized and refused entry.

We now face a Department of Homeland Security funded with the appallingly astronomical sum of \$170 billion dollars. With such resources, some are being spent to create a gulag of private detention facilities. Members of the Committee: I am a Jewish American, and I know all too well how the Germans rounded up Jews (and others) to detain them in labor and concentration camps, and to murder millions of them. This DHS/ICE force is rogue and is growing. It threatens innocent people – but not only those who were born elsewhere. If not stopped, they will be targeting U.S. citizens. They are already building a secret police, and have demonstrated a willingness or tactical intention to ignore our laws and repress our constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Members of this Committee, we need you to put into place legal mechanisms by which we can restrain those ambitions and protect civil detainees: innocent people who are neither accused of any crime nor have been found guilty through proper due process. We need you to ensure that if and when people are detained, they are held in conditions that are safe, and that do not threaten their *physical* health (while acknowledging that the campaign against them is already detrimental to their *mental health* because the very act of detaining them, separating them from their families, and threatening to send them to their former countries or third-countries must affect their mental health even before they are detained, but already live in fear.)

Further, please enable us – private citizens who are prepared to support our immigrant neighbors – to serve as watchdogs. From the employees in detention centers to people living nearby, we Marylanders who believe in social justice will be seeking ways to protect our innocent neighbors. But in light of the growing surveillance power and ICE as a secret police, it is essential that those who challenge conditions may do so anonymously.

Members of the Committee: We understand that during this Session you are swamped by proposed bills relating to ICE. We understand that you, like us, are being targeted by Steve Bannon’s infamous “firehose”. Please, however, make these bills your priority because they not only affect many innocent people, but are also critical for restraining a repressive force wielded by an authoritarian regime. These times are historic and the issues are existential. Please report out SB 985 **favorably** – for the sake of the many innocent individuals and families in and around the state of Maryland.

Respectfully,
Marcia Greenberg, St Mary’s County