



Office of The Mayor Celina Benitez

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Tuesday, January 20, 2026

RE: Strong Support for SB 245

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the City of Mount Rainier, I respectfully submit this testimony in **strong support of Senate Bill 245**, legislation that would prohibit the State and local governments from entering into immigration enforcement agreements and require the termination of existing agreements by July 1, 2026. This bill establishes clear and consistent boundaries between local public safety responsibilities and federal immigration enforcement, ensuring that local resources remain focused on community safety and well-being

Mount Rainier believes that public safety is strongest when residents feel safe engaging with local government and law enforcement without fear. Immigration enforcement agreements, such as those authorized under federal law and memoranda of understanding, can undermine that trust by blurring the lines between local policing and federal immigration functions. SB 245 appropriately clarifies that local and state agencies should not be placed in the role of enforcing civil immigration law, allowing officers to focus on their core mission of protecting residents and preventing crime.

This issue is especially important for Mount Rainier, a diverse and welcoming community. Our City's ability to deliver effective public safety services depends on strong relationships, open communication, and community cooperation. When residents fear that interactions with local government could lead to immigration consequences, they are less likely to report crimes, serve as witnesses, or seek assistance in emergencies. SB 245 supports a public safety model rooted in trust, inclusion, and collaboration, values that are fundamental to Mount Rainier's community-oriented approach.

In addition, the bill provides important statewide consistency by prohibiting all units of local government and their agents from entering into immigration enforcement agreements and by setting a clear deadline for terminating existing agreements

This clarity protects local governments from uncertainty, legal risk, and resource strain, while reaffirming Maryland's commitment to fair and effective public safety practices. For these reasons, the City of Mount Rainier urges the Committee to issue a **favorable report on Senate Bill 245** and advance this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on public safety and community trust. Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Celina Benitez

Mayor Celina Benitez, City of Mount Rainier