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Carol Stern
4550 North Park Avenue Apt. T106
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

**Testimony in Support of SB 245 - Favorable
Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition**

TO: Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Carol Stern

I am testifying in favor of as a resident of Montgomery County's District 16 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

My sacred text and tradition teach us to welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34 explicitly instructs us to treat immigrants in our land the same as native citizens. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote "teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our immigration justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

The 287(g) program has a well-documented history of racial profiling, discrimination, and wrongful detentions. It diverts local law enforcement from their primary duty of protecting public safety, forcing them to act as immigration agents rather than community protectors. This erodes trust, particularly among immigrant communities, making people less likely to report crimes or seek help when needed. Ending 287(g) ensures Maryland's resources are used to foster public safety—not help the federal deportation agenda.

All Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to equal protection under the law and deserve to be treated with human dignity. In the face of unprecedented attacks, our immigrant communities in Maryland along with CASA and other non-profits are doing everything they can to protect families and to advocate for their communities. Maryland has the power to stop enabling Trump's cruel mass deportations and be a firewall against authoritarianism. This moment calls for action on the part of the State Legislature. To protect justice and public safety for all Marylanders, please pass SB245 so that Maryland can join Delaware, New Jersey, California, Oregon, Washington, Illinois, and Colorado, who have all ended and/or refused local ICE partnerships.

I respectfully urge a favorable report for SB245.