

Date of Hearing: 1/22/26

Jonathan Levitas
Baltimore, MD 21230

TESTIMONY ON SB#0245 - FAVORABLE

Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition

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

FROM: Jonathan Levitas

My name is Jonathan Levitas. I am a resident of District 46, and am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0245 (Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition).

I am a resident of Riverside, in Baltimore, Maryland, and a member of Beth Am Congregation, the Riverside Neighborhood Association, and, lately, several mutual aid organizations. I write on my own behalf, and on behalf of my family.

I support this bill because I come from a family of immigrants, and this country welcomed us. Because so many in my family suffered horrors in their countries of origin, perpetrated by governments and government-supported vigilantes. Because I do not want this to happen to anyone, anywhere, and certainly not in my country. Because it *is* happening here, in my country.

My family came to the United States in 1986, when I was two years old. My father was already an American citizen, having immigrated earlier in his life, but my mother did not become a citizen until October 29, 2015. Had she not done so, I could not safely write this testimony. This is what Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter called “a chilling effect.” I never thought a time would come when I would have to make such considerations, but here we are.

What our federal government is doing is evil. Every day there are more stories in my own communities, and in others all over this country, of people kidnapped, citizens and non-citizens alike, mothers, fathers, children, all targets. Stories of violent attacks on peaceful protesters. Stories of murder.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote: “in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.” We must take responsibility for what our federal government is doing. If we cannot at this moment stop it, we can at least stop authorities within our state from collaborating. That is why I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0245.