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**TESTIMONY ON SB245 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**

**Public Safety - Immigration Enforcement Agreements - Prohibition**

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

**FROM:** Miriam Eisenstein

My name is Miriam Eisenstein. I am a resident of District 16 in Montgomery County. I am a retired attorney and an active member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation. I am submitting this testimony in support of the SB245 prohibiting counties from entering into Section 287(b) contracts with ICE.

Leviticus 19:33-34 says "The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native- born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt." My grandparents were born in Eastern Europe. They came to this country late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when we did not yet have harsh and restrictive laws against immigration. Having arrived here, they were permitted to live in peace and to become American citizens. Had this not been the case, I would not be here today, for they undoubtedly would have perished in pogroms or, had they survived, would have become victims of Hitler's murderous plan. Today, our government might well have hounded them unmercifully and sought to deport them back to the persecutors' hands.

Today, people who have fled to our shores to find safety are facing unwarranted arrest - even if they are here seeking asylum or, in some cases, even if they are citizens. The "foreigners residing among" us are being subjected to violence, separation of families, and deportation - without hearings - to countries where imprisonment is brutal and their lives may be in danger. Our local officials should not cooperate in this unjust scheme. On the contrary, they should be prohibited from doing so. One step in that direction would be to pass SB245 to deny counties the right to contract with ICE to act as their agents.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB245.**