



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

January 20, 2026

The Honorable Will Smith
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Dear Chair Will Smith and Members of the Committee:

The Montgomery County Council is in strong support of SB 245.

This legislation is rooted in sound policy and constitutional principles. Immigration enforcement is, and must remain, a federal responsibility. When local law enforcement is drawn into civil immigration matters, it blurs jurisdictional lines and diverts limited resources away from core public-safety priorities, crime prevention, emergency response, and community trust and cooperation.

Extensive evidence confirms that community trust is essential to public safety. According to the U.S. DOJ, residents are far more likely to report crimes, assist investigators, and seek help when they trust that local police are focused on their safety rather than immigration enforcement. Conversely, where local authorities have been perceived as arms of federal immigration, immigrant communities, including mixed-status families and U.S. citizens, greatly reduce 911 calls, withhold cooperation in domestic-violence cases, and avoid engagement with law enforcement. Those dynamics compromise safety for the entire community.

SB 245 also responds to the fiscal and operational realities facing local governments. Immigration-enforcement agreements such as 287(g) impose substantial costs, training, supervision, detention, and legal liabilities, while federal reimbursement remains limited and uncertain. Moreover, these programs can expose counties and municipalities to civil-rights litigation, reducing public confidence in government.

Crucially, SB 245 does not limit cooperation with federal authorities on serious criminal matters. Local agencies would retain full authority to share information and work jointly with federal officials where appropriate. The legislation draws the line specifically at delegating civil immigration authority, an approach that research and practical experience show does not reduce crime, but rather erodes trust and safety in communities.

NATALI FANI-GONZÁLEZ

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Economic Development Committee (ECON)

MEMBER
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Finally, let's take a hard look at what's unfolding in American cities since immigration crackdowns began in Los Angeles, spread to Chicago, and now reach Minneapolis. That is not who we are, that is not how we keep communities safe. On the contrary, these actions generate chaos, the oldest tactic in the book used throughout history by dictators to install fear and tighten their grip on power. Local enforcement in our state cannot be part of that.

For these reasons, the Council strongly urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to report SB 245 out favorably. Thank you for your leadership and for advancing policies that enhance public safety, respect constitutional boundaries, and reflect the diverse needs of Maryland communities.

Sincerely,



Natali Fani-González
Montgomery County Council President
Councilmember, District 6
Chair, Economic Development Committee