

January 20, 2026

Gail Lipsitz

Pikesville, MD

TESTIMONY ON SB245 – POSITION:(FAVORABLE/FAVORABLE)

Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition

TO: Chair William Smith, Vice Chair Jeff Waldstreicher, and members of the JPR Committee

FROM: Gail Lipsitz

My name is Gail Lipsitz. I am a resident of District 11B. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB0245, Public Safety – Immigration Enforcement Agreements – Prohibition.

I am a member of Chizuk Amuno Congregation’s Social Justice and Advocacy Committee. I strongly support SBO245 to protect our immigrant neighbors and communities. 287g agreements promote racial profiling and the unlawful abduction of people without due process. These agreements have resulted in the intensified use of brutal tactics, forceful separation of families, hasty deportations, and spreading fear. This violence and injustice violate my Jewish values. The Torah repeatedly mandates empathy for the immigrant or refugee who seeks help and protection among us, pointing to the Jewish people’s history of persecution: “You shall not wrong nor oppress the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:34). Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman in the 12th century interpreted this command: “I see the tears of the oppressed who have no comforter, while the hand of the oppressors has power.”

Last August (2025) I participated in a peaceful gathering of the Jewish community, CASA, and other allies at Hopkins Plaza to protest the actions of ICE in Baltimore. This was just a few days after Kilmar Abrego Garcia was returned from illegal imprisonment in Venezuela and faced the threat of another deportation. Mr. Abrego Garcia was present and spoke briefly, encouraging us to stand up for the constitutional rights of every person living in the USA, whatever their immigration or citizenship status. I was very moved by seeing this courageous man who has been so mistreated. As I stood in front of the tall, impersonal George H. Fallon Federal Building, looking up at rows of blank windows, and knowing that it held many people unjustly detained and denied their basic rights -- the realization that this persecution is happening right here in my own community hit me hard.

In closing, I respectfully urge you to pass SB0245 with no carve-outs. Please seek justice, promote compassion, and protect our immigrant communities in Maryland.

Thank you for your consideration.

