

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0346 Civil Actions - Violation of Constitutional Rights
(No Kings Act) - House Judiciary Committee
April 1, 2026**

Chair Bartlett and members of the House Judiciary Committee: My name is Jennifer Hess. I have lived in Silver Spring, Maryland, for almost 30 years. I am among a group of neighbors who last year formed North Woodside Civil Resistance out of concern for the threat to our democracy posed by the actions of the Trump administration. I am writing to support SB 0346, the No Kings Act.

Federal immigration agents have been operating all over the country as if our laws did not apply to them. Masked unidentified agents terrorize our communities with no regard for basic American protections such as due process, freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and protection from unreasonable searches and seizures.

Violence seems to be an essential part of immigration agents' *modus operandi*; they actually seem to delight in using excessive force. ICE's calling card is the smashed car window, the mother thrown on the ground, the children crying in fear or choking on pepper spray. Videos of brutal apprehensions are posted on government social media accounts, as if for entertainment.

Our state needs to make clear that we do not accept these lawless tactics. We need to impose a price on agents who would terrorize the most vulnerable members of our community as if their lives did not count. *Allowing such crimes to continue unchecked invites further abuses.* SB0346 would be an important step towards accountability by allowing those whose constitutional rights have been violated by federal agents the right to sue in Maryland courts.

Opponents have criticized the bill as a slap at federal law enforcement. But the bill only targets those agents that violate our constitutional rights. Do opponents think that agents violating the rights of Marylanders should be able to do so with impunity? The systematic violation of the rights of our immigrant neighbors is what gives rise to the urgent need for this legislation. Marylanders need a mechanism to protect their constitutional rights from the pattern of abuse we have witnessed from immigration officials. As it is right now, Maryland law enforcement officers are subject to civil liability. Why should federal agents be given a free pass?

SB0346 is a straightforward method to protect our community from violations of basic rights. Thank you for your consideration.

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