



**Testimony on HB 1536 - Favorable**  
**HB 1536 - Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency (MELT) Act**  
**House Judiciary Committee**

**March 11, 2026**

Dear Honorable Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis, and Members of the Committee,

Silver Spring Justice Coalition offers **favorable** testimony in support of **HB 1536 - Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency (MELT) Act**.

The Silver Spring Justice Coalition is an organization of community members, faith groups, and civil and human rights organizations from throughout Montgomery County that works to reduce the presence of police in our communities; eliminate violence and harm by police; establish transparency and accountability; and redirect public funds toward community needs.

This bill is about upholding Maryland's values—fairness, dignity, and justice for all. This bill affirms that our state should not be in the business of tearing families apart, undermining public trust, or funneling state and local resources into a federal deportation agenda. Instead, Maryland should remain focused on community safety, due process, and equal treatment under the law by prohibiting efforts at immigration enforcement in Maryland in every way possible.

Our immigrant community is under siege by federal government actions. Places in Montgomery County that used to bustle are empty and quiet because immigrants (and some who might be perceived as immigrants) are afraid to venture out for fear of a chance encounter with federal officials or local law enforcement. Immigrants are having food delivered by local mutual aid groups, getting others to take their children to school (or keeping them home), setting up Standby Guardianship for their children in case the parents are detained or deported, and even afraid to answer their phones or open their door to anyone they do not know.

Immigrants are also increasingly fearful of going to required government appointments, where they could be detained or face deportation to a third country, which ensures they are targeted and face deportation if found.

Thus it is vital that the State minimize the daily risks immigrants face by protecting them from encounters with federal actions in as many ways as possible.

This bill would prohibit people from assisting in immigration enforcement in ways that are contrary to Maryland and federal laws, require any assistance to be documented, and provide means to hold accountable, anyone violating this law.

Thirty-two people died in ICE custody in 2025, the highest level since 2004. In January 2026 alone, 6 died in ICE custody and we know of at least 2 who died in the last 2 weeks.

Human rights advocates, immigration lawyers and lawmakers have reported unsanitary conditions, inadequate food and poor medical care in ICE facilities. ICE detention facilities have been cited as serving worm-infested food or no food at all, having people sleeping on concrete floors, withholding medical treatment, denying access to legal representation, and throwing people into solitary without cause.

ICE actions have already created an environment of fear and uncertainty which discourages individuals from seeking medical care, pursuing education, accessing legal resources, or engaging with law enforcement. As a result, our communities, public health, and overall safety are at risk.

Our friends and neighbors, including those who have called Maryland home for decades, live in fear of being detained or deported, forcibly separated from their children, and prevented from supporting their families. This needs to stop.

It is vital that the State ensures that we minimize the risks immigrants face by protecting them from detention in every way possible, including prohibiting assisting immigration enforcement wherever possible.

As part of the Maryland Immigrant Justice Table, along with CASA, we support a clean bill which will hold anyone accountable who assists immigration enforcement illegally. This is what will bring Maryland closer to our values

For these reasons, the **Silver Spring Justice Coalition** adamantly urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue a **favorable report** on **HB 1536**.

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