



Testimony of Jaime Contreras, Executive Vice President of 32BJ SEIU
Montgomery County Council
In Support of Expedited Bill 35-25
January 13, 2026

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
CTW, CLC

MANNY PASTREICH
President

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Assistant to the President

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Dear President Fani-Gonzalez and members of the Council,

32BJ SEIU is proud to stand in solidarity with immigrant workers in Montgomery County and the millions nationwide who live in constant fear of detention and deportation. As an organization that is dedicated to advancing and protecting the rights of workers' and their families, we strongly urge the passage of Bill 35-25 the Immigrant Protections Act. This is critical legislation to ensure that all County residents feel safe, valued, and welcome in our communities while upholding civil and constitutional rights.

32BJ is the largest building service union in the country, representing over 185,000 members up and down the East Coast and over 2,000 members right here in Montgomery County. Our members are primarily immigrants and people of color who make up the essential workforce that keep our homes, workplaces, schools, and transportation hubs running. With our dedicated members, we fight to build a just society where immigrants can live free of fear and are treated with dignity and respect.

Unfortunately, communities nationwide are facing an unprecedented attack by ICE. Immigration arrests have tripled across the country. This issue is particularly pressing in Montgomery County, where immigrants make up 30% of the County's population. The current administration's immigration dragnet has left few communities unscathed. Our union family is no exception: multiple 32BJ members have been subjected to unjust detention by ICE.

We at 32BJ believe it is totally unacceptable for ICE to harass and detain honest, hardworking members of our community. Montgomery County must not contribute local law enforcement resources towards such actions.

32BJ strongly supports efforts to codify into County law immigrant protections and to strengthen measures to limit and where feasible prohibit the use of County resources and warrant-less cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement or any federal agency for the purpose of detention and deportation, ultimately leading to family separation. We urge the adoption of policies and legislation that focus on ensuring that community members feel safe, not threatened by their local government, including their local law enforcement units.

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The fight for workers' rights and the fight for immigrants' rights are indistinguishable. Legislation that continues to uphold this truth by limiting County/ICE partnerships, as allowed by federal and state law, in particular, policies that prohibit the voluntary use of any County resource, including local law enforcement, in the abduction of County residents by ICE are extremely necessary and much welcomed during this time of uncertainty and increased ICE enforcement in our Montgomery County communities and align the County with being a welcoming jurisdictions for residents, regardless of their immigration status.

Montgomery County must stand firmly on the side of families, community trust, racial justice, and constitutional rights. By codifying these protections, the Council will send a clear message that the County rejects using local resources to tear families apart and reaffirms its commitment to being a truly welcoming and safe place for all residents.

32BJ urges a favorable report on Expedite Bill 35-25 Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act). Thank you for your consideration.

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