

January 12, 2026

Distinguished Montgomery County Council members:

I write these words today to the Montgomery County Council on the ancestral homelands of the Piscataway Nation and as a Montgomery County resident. I express my support for the Trust Act -Expedited Bill 35-25 and call on you to exercise your leadership on behalf of all of us here in Montgomery County and adopt and codify these values through this Bill. Your actions set the tone for other counties in Maryland.

Even as I write these words, helicopters are circling our neighborhood, and this is only several hours after one of the larger raids in Montgomery County while community members were simply living their lives. Over the weekend we heard from community members that they were racially profiled by ICE, chased like animals. And we bore witness to yet one more very public and traumatizing detention in front of Blair High School, not far from my neighborhood, where many, many families have been impacted by the horrific separation of their families. A Maya community member who is also a friend, expressed: "Things are becoming so bad, I was told that I should move from here. But where am I to go?"

I am outraged - we should all be outraged. It should not take the killing or kidnapping of one more person to know that ICE has never had the interest or the safety of our communities. Contrary to what ICE says they are NOT "prioritizing public safety by locating, arresting and removing criminal aliens and immigration violators from our neighborhoods." The reality is different. For years our people have been racially profiled and killed under the hands of ICE and CBP all over the country. Between 2018 and 2019 six Maya children died or were killed under the hands of CBP. Every murder by CBP, ICE and all enforcement mechanisms under DHS are an affront to humanity and must be brought to justice. *Simply put ICE is acting with impunity.* They are criminalizing our communities, tearing our families apart, terrorizing our children, women, elders. Black, Indigenous, and communities of color are at heightened risk. Just in Montgomery County there are approximately a little over 10,000 Indigenous Maya people. Enough is enough.

As an Indigenous woman who is the survivor of war and genocide, what we are currently living is reminiscent of the war and persecution of places like Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and many other countries that have been witness to US intervention and military aid. Many in our communities were forced to migrate as refugees seeking asylum and safety, a right that is recognized by international law.

Today you have the chance to act for the human rights of every person in this county regardless of status. Montgomery County as the home to the largest immigrant population in all of Maryland can show an example of leadership and protection to all people. Your actions to defend the rights of every person in this country will be felt by thousands. Making each person feel welcomed and have access to the resources that the county offers includes information in Indigenous languages.

I call on each of you to pass The Trust Act - Expedited Bill 35-25 and let our communities know that we are safe here in Montgomery County. Set the tone and let the county know that they cannot discriminate against our people simply because of where we are born, the languages that we speak, the color of our skin, our gender, or who we love. Do what is right and do not collude with ICE. When we see the phrase *Immigrants Belong Here*, show us through your actions that we do.

Thank you,  
J. Cabrera Lopez