

## **Testimony in support of Expedited Bill 35-25**

*Rev. Louise Green, Cedar Lane UU Congregation, Bethesda*

Good afternoon. I am the Rev. Louise Green—Clergy, organizer, and caring neighbor. Minister of Pastoral Care at Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Congregation, a founding group in both CAN and AIM organizing networks.

I am speaking today in strong support of an urgently needed bill. All the policy details can be established, the process of governance will continue, let's hope quickly. Today, I call your attention to the great need for expedited action.

Our resident neighbors are suffering. The impact of harsh and untrustworthy federal action is all around. Not just in other cities around the country, but right here, in our region. There is less national spotlight in Montgomery County for now, and yet, the same cruel tactics are used by federal forces right here.

The impact on targeted groups is real, and of course, falls heavily on brown and black people. Here are examples from my experience as a pastor over the last 5 months:

There is an 8-yr-old, once happy-go-lucky child, in public school counseling. She now has panic attacks and even suicidal thoughts, ever since her father was abruptly detained and remains held in detention.

There is a work authorized and documented construction worker who must drive early to Virginia daily, and fears abduction. He knows no paperwork will fully protect him these days.

There is a mother weeping because she came to the US to escape gang violence. She now lives primarily in her apartment and immediate neighborhood. Afraid to shop, go to a park, or seek any medical or police assistance.

This is our country now. Huge numbers of people fearing life in community. Millions more risking federal violence to stand for decency and kindness with our neighbors.

Everything that happens at the city, county and state levels matters as never before.

I have hope that the Montgomery County Council understands this, and will act boldly to offer the maximum protection possible in a time of great danger.

I trust that all of us, as caring human beings could bring our hearts and minds to offer accompaniment... to *anyone* in our county, region, state and country that lives in terror.

We are all needed now.

Please, act swiftly and boldly for such a time as this.

Thank you for listening.