

March 3, 2026

Carol Stern

Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

TESTIMONY ON Bill 3-26 - FAVORABLE
The County Values Act

TO: Council President Fani-González, Vice President Balcombe, and members of the County Council

FROM: Carol Stern

My name is Carol Stern, and I am testifying in favor of, as a resident of Montgomery County's District 1 and a member of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda.

My sacred text and tradition teach us to welcome the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34 explicitly instructs us to treat the immigrants in our land the same as native citizens. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan wrote "teach us to respect the integrity of every human soul be it that of a friend or stranger, child or adult." When we are working to reform our immigration justice system, we must demand that it operates in accordance with these deeply held Jewish beliefs.

This bill issues guidance to fully enact The Maryland Values Act for Montgomery County with important guidance for all County Departments. Bill 3-26 seeks to mirror and align The Maryland Values Act that requires that: 1) public schools, public libraries, and certain units of the executive branch of State or local government that operate at a "sensitive location" to "deny access" to any portion of the sensitive location not accessible to the public to any individual who is seeking access "for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration law" unless the individual presents a valid warrant issued by a federal court or 2) exigent circumstances exist.

No one should hesitate to seek life-saving care or attend school due to fear of immigration enforcement. This bill follows the Maryland Values Act by establishing the County Values Act with clear guidelines restricting ICE access to sensitive locations, including schools, courthouses, hospitals, places of worship, and other vital spaces.

The Maryland Values Act and the County Values Act are crucial to protect our sensitive locations from ICE enforcers. I applaud the County Council for taking a strong stand and proposing the County Values Act to protect our immigrant residents, who pay taxes, work hard for our communities, and are a vibrant part of our society.

I respectfully urge the County Council to pass Bill 3-26.