



Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony

County Council Bill 3-26:
Administration – Immigration Enforcement Guidance – Required (The County Values Act)

March 3, 2026

SUPPORT

The Montgomery County Community Action Board (CAB), the County's local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, strongly supports Council Bill 3-26, which would take several steps to better protect community members. These steps include the following: restricting ICE access to non-public areas; prohibiting the use of County-owned or County-controlled parking lots, garages, and vacant lots by ICE; requiring signage for County-controlled/owned property; and the establishment of immigration enforcement guidance for County Departments.

As the governing body for the Community Action Agency and the County's Head Start program, we support this bill as a way to protect vulnerable members of our community, many of whom are served by our agency's programs; in this case, we are specifically advocating the protection of our highly vulnerable immigrant community. We hear directly from staff in our Takoma-East Silver Spring (TESS) Community Action Center, Navigation Program, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, the Cluster Projects, and our Board's own Community Advocacy Institute about the direct impacts of these immigration enforcement policies on residents. In addition to the day-to-day problems they face in their lives, they understandably fear for their safety and well-being.

We applaud the Council's ongoing efforts to do as much as you can to protect immigrants in our community. It is important to note that although our County's sizeable immigrant community, about one third of the County's population¹, will certainly benefit from additional protections and policies, many community members are fearful of interactions with ICE right now. While ICE claims that they are targeting violent criminals, they have indiscriminately targeted all people of color: men, women, and children; they have entered facilities in wanton disregard of 4th Amendment protections; children have watched helplessly as their parents are arrested or detained then left alone; and they have violently beaten individuals for little to no reason. The unrelenting actions of ICE have caused people to fear going to work, going to food banks, obtaining health care, seeking social services, and going to school.

¹ [Montgomery County, Maryland - Census Bureau Profile](#)

To date, the immigrant community has had few places to seek safe haven. Bill 3-26 affords our immigrant community just that in Montgomery County owned property and facilities. Our immigrant community needs to know that they are welcome in Montgomery County and that the County is prepared to protect them from ICE. While Bill 3-26 may not address all of their fears, it will let them know that there are safe places to go for food, social services, health care, and, most importantly, somewhere to go where they will be out of the reach of those who are prepared to snatch them up for no reason, take them from their families, and deport them to a country to which they have no ties.

Finally, it is important that consistent guidance be provided to all County departments, as would be required by this bill. County employees should be able to know how to react to those circumstances where our immigrants are seeking shelter. Just as importantly, the immigrant community should not have to guess how they will be received in County facilities or whether they will be welcomed and protected at all.

The Community Action Board strongly supports Bill 3-26 and we offer our continued support for future efforts to protect immigrants in our community.

