

Testimony FOR Bill 3-26
Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act)
Montgomery County Council

March 3, 2026

Dear President Fani-González and members of the Council,

The Racial and Ethnic Justice Ministry Team (REJMT) of Seekers Church is pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of the **Expedited Bill 3-26** Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act). This critical legislation will help ensure that all County residents feel safe, valued, and welcome in our communities while upholding civil and constitutional rights.

Most members of Seekers Church are residents of Montgomery County. Seekers Church is a diverse, progressive, and affirming family of faith working for peace and justice in our community and in the world. REJMT, in particular, nurtures our commitment to “foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need,” and to “work to end all war, and violence, and discord.” In furtherance of that work, Seekers Church and members have: hosted trainings and impacted-community events; provided financial and volunteer support to immigrant-focused local NGOs; taught English; provided direct immigrant support; accompanied neighbors to immigration and court hearings; advocated for statewide legislation; and participated in rallies.

Immigrants make up 30% of the County’s population and are integral to the fabric of our community. We know firsthand the value of diverse communities and the vibrant social fabric that is woven when those communities come together to learn, to work, and to care for one another. Similarly, now, we all feel the impact of Trump’s cruel deportation machine, disappearing county residents with minimum trace and no due process. The fear and anxiety in our community and places of worship is high and palpable. It has disrupted family and community life making fearful families miss jobs, school, language classes and food distribution. Tens of MCPS students have been deported or forced to self-deport.

Collaboration between the Department of Homeland Security and state and local law enforcement makes us all less safe by eroding public trust in police and scaring people from being witnesses, reporting crime and cooperating in investigations. Such collaboration encourages rampant racial-profiling and targets valuable, productive and contributing community members. Moreover, during a time when the state and the county face serious fiscal challenges, such collaboration adds more to the plates of already struggling county agencies and diverts local resources to do ICE’s job for them.

REJMT 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. During this time, REJMT urges policies and legislation that focus on ensuring that community members feel safe, not threatened by their local government, including their local law enforcement units.

By codifying these protections, the Montgomery County 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.

The Racial and Ethnic Justice Ministry Team (REJMT) of Seekers urges a favorable report on **Expedited Bill 3-26** Immigrant Protections (Promoting Community Trust - Immigrant Protections Act).