

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

26-0144

*Baltimore City Policies and Procedures
Safe Spaces and Communities*

Public Testimony

CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor
Zeke Cohen – Council President



Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead - Director
100 Holliday Street, Room 415
Baltimore, MD 21202

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Honorable Mark Conway
CHAIR

Attendance Sheet

3/10/2026

26-0144

Baltimore City Policies and Procedures - Safe Spaces and Communities

SIGN IN TO TESTIFY			Position:		Check if Baltimore City lobbyist*
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION AND/OR CONTACT INFORMATION	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	
Buzz GRANBO	GRANBO	850-776-9832	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
VALERIA	GOMEZ	410.837- ⁵ 8 754	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marta	Mills	443-761-2689	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
William	HERMANN	443-761-2675	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alexandra	Lezerow	Jews United for Justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lucy	Pollard	410-409-6328	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Crisaly	De Los Santos	CASA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: (410) 396-7986

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*Translator
Needed* ✓

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FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION AND/OR CONTACT INFORMATION	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	
Cindy	Dgide	We are CASA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shaw	Javis	Shaw	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION AND/OR CONTACT INFORMATION	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	
Monserath	A.	CASA Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sergio	Espana	CJST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alex	Lozeraw	Jews United for Justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cindy	ogide	CASA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Calvin	Lynn	Jews United for Justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION AND/OR CONTACT INFORMATION	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	
Cindy	Baez	631-303-2359	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arizon	Dannon		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mardijk	Carlisle	410-433-7245	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vincent	Tola	(443) 414-2425	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Samantha	Master	Organizing Black 301-828-6138	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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March 10, 2026
Josie Burger
Baltimore, MD 21218

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

TO: Chair Conway and members of the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Josie Burger

OPENING: My name is Josie Burger. I am a resident of Baltimore City Northern District. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.

As a member of society and an educator, I believe it is my responsibility to uphold the institutions of human rights and dignity for all Baltimore City Residents. This bill is significant to me because it is a step toward prioritizing the safety of our friends, neighbors, children, and anyone in between. No human being deserves to live in fear or be terrorized by their own government.

I have been an educator for several years in both Baltimore City and Los Angeles. What I have found is that not only do immigrants in general make our country great, support our communities, and contribute to the overall humanity of our neighborhoods, but children of immigrants are some of the most impactful learners and positive influences in education. What I have also discovered is that as my students that have more sheltered perspectives continue to learn and grow, they develop a more profound respect for all human life, regardless of immigration status or identity. This bill indicates to me that some of the adults helping to run the city have developed this same level of respect and empathy. Baltimore City PD or any local law enforcement should not be enabling the efforts of ICE, nonetheless contributing to them. I have seen enough children with broken hearts, struggling to grasp onto a sense of “normal”, after having their families ripped apart by this militaristic, unconstitutional agency. For local law enforcement to join them would be a disgrace to the constitution and an implication that democracy is crumbling before us. BPD’s job is to enforce the law and maintain justice. They cannot credibly do their job while simultaneously empowering ICE to harass communities and instigate violence.

Mayor Brandon Scott and the City Council have an obligation to do the right thing, and commit to legislation that will protect Baltimore City’s residents, prevent law enforcement from discriminating against any resident, and uphold the rights of all people in this city. The people of

this city deserve protection, peace, and safety. Moreover, immigration enforcement must be held accountable for the agency's unconstitutional behavior and attack on the constitution. **I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

March 10, 2026
Rev. Lyn Cox
Baltimore, MD 21209

Testimony in Support of Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

To: Chair Conway and the members of the Public Safety Committee
From: Rev. Lyn Cox

My name is Lyn Cox. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 5. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.

I am a parent and a religious professional living in Baltimore city with my interfaith family. I am also a National Certified Counselor, having graduated with a Master's degree from Loyola University of Maryland. Together with my neighbors in Jews United for Justice and the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland, I am working to help our city live into its calling as a place where we grow into the love and compassion that we are capable of as human beings.

Between my religious work and my counseling work, I have seen the impact on my neighbors of racial profiling and other abuses of power. Adults face obstacles in caring for their families. Young people are discouraged from achieving their potential. People of all ages suffer from health challenges based on stress. We can do better, and thanks to local advocates like the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs, I believe that things have improved. The progress that has been made in accountability and trust building will be erased unless we prevent our local resources from being diverted to terrorize our immigrant neighbors.

The Safe Spaces and Communities Act, among other features, would require the Baltimore Police Department to protect city residents from lawless federal immigration enforcement actions. BPD officers would be required to de-escalate if they find themselves on the scene of an immigration enforcement action that threatens lives or public safety. As we have seen in other cities, this is not theoretical. We need our BPD officers to protect city residents from being harassed and murdered by federal agents. With this act, BPD would document immigration enforcement actions by using their body cameras and by asking for vital information. Federal agents should have to comply with at least as much accountability as our local officers, and we have the resources to put some of the elements of accountability in place.

In closing, I support using every lever available to us as a city to rein in violent, lawless, and reckless immigration enforcement agents. This act would implement safeguards that we need right now to help Baltimore city residents to go about their business with less fear and with more faith in our local community. I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.



Showing Up for Racial Justice

March 10, 2026

Rianna Eckel

2300 Hunter St, Baltimore 21218

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

Chair Conway and members of the Public Safety Committee,

My name is Rianna Eckel. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 12 and a member of the coordinating committee of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore. SURJ is a group working to move white folks as part of a multiracial movement for equity and racial justice, and a member of the Campaign for Justice, Safety, and Jobs Coalition. **I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

All of our neighbors deserve to feel safe and supported in our city, regardless of their immigration status. But due to the terror inflicted on our communities by the current administration, Baltimore's immigrant communities increasingly live in fear, hesitant to leave their homes for work, attend medical appointments, take their children to school, or do any of the other things most of us take for granted as aspects of daily life.

ICE's presence in Baltimore is now intensifying. We need city leaders to respond with the urgency that the moment demands. Baltimore elected officials must use every legal tool at their disposal to resist the Trump administration's inhumane deportation agenda and its assault on the basic civil rights of Black and Brown immigrant residents and those who defend them.

Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act, protects our residents by:

- prohibiting discrimination on the basis of citizenship or immigration status,
- prohibiting cooperation with federal immigration enforcement in most cases, and
- requiring BPD not to engage or assist with immigration enforcement.

This bill is a crucial first step in protecting our immigrant communities from the federal deportation regime. **I, and SURJ Baltimore, respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

Testimony on Council Bill 26-0144 - Safe Spaces and Communities
Position: Support with Amendments

To: Council Member Mark Conway, Chair
Council Member Zac Blanchard, Vice Chair
Members of the Baltimore City Council Public Safety Committee

From: Monique L. Dixon, Executive Director and Michael Pinard, Faculty Director, Gibson-Banks
Center for Race and the Law

Maureen A. Sweeney, Faculty Director, Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice

Date: March 9, 2026

On behalf of the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law (“Gibson-Banks Center”) and the Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice (“Chacón Center or the Center”) at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law,¹ we appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Council Bill 26-0144. The Gibson-Banks Center works collaboratively to re-imagine and transform institutions and systems of racial inequality, marginalization, and oppression. Through education, advocacy, and research, the Center examines and addresses racial inequality, including the intersection of race with sex, gender, or disability, and advances racial justice in a variety of issue areas, including the criminal legal system and public safety. The Chacón Center works to create a future where all Maryland families and residents are stable and secure regardless of immigration status, race, or economics. The Center supports vigorous advocacy for immigrant justice and, through its clinics, provides direct representation and engages in litigation on issues of asylum and the intersection of criminal and immigration law.

We urge committee members to vote in favor of Council Bill 26-0144 – Safe Spaces and Communities, which seeks to protect all Baltimore City residents, particularly Black and Brown immigrants, from unlawful federal immigration enforcement activities. We respectfully ask that you

¹ This written testimony is submitted on behalf of the Gibson-Banks Center and the Chacón Center and not on behalf of the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, the University of Maryland, Baltimore, or the University System of Maryland.

consider amending the bill by including enforcement mechanisms described below, which would help city officials to monitor compliance with the proposed city ordinance.

Council Bill 26-0144 is being introduced at critical moment. Maryland is home to a growing population of immigrants, including Black and Brown immigrants from the Caribbean² and Latin America. Reportedly, arrests by federal agents from the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency have nearly tripled in Maryland from 2024 to 2025.³ In Baltimore, these arrests have included violent interactions between federal immigration agents and residents who were doing nothing more than reporting to work or taking their children to school.⁴

The Council Bill would help to give Baltimore City residents the confidence to access essential city services, knowing that immigration status will not be used to disqualify them and that City policy will decrease the likelihood of violent and unlawful clashes with immigration officials. The Bill does this by, among other things, prohibiting city agencies that provide direct public services as well as entities that contract with them (collectively referred to as city agencies) from: discriminating against a person based on their actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status; cooperating with immigration officials unless they are required to do so by federal or state law or court order; asking a person to disclose or storing any information about a person's citizenship or immigration status, or investigating persons' citizenship or immigration status unless required by a law, court order, or for a city function. Council Bill 26-0144 bill would also require city agencies to develop an immigration enforcement action response plan for preventing immigration officials from accessing space that is not open to the public without a judicial warrant; and the BPD to deescalate any life-threatening interactions between immigration officials and a person.

The provisions of the bill are necessary and urgent. They would be stronger, however, if there were enforcement mechanisms included to ensure that city agencies are complying with the bill. For example, the bill could include a process by which aggrieved persons could file a complaint alleging violations of provisions of the bill or one in which city agencies would be required to undergo occasional compliance reviews and corrective actions if agencies have been found out of compliance with any bill provision.

We support Council Bill 26-0144 because it is an important step in protecting Baltimore residents from unlawful immigration enforcement and time is of the absolute essence. However, for the reasons stated above, we urge Public Safety Committee members to vote in support of the bill with our suggested amendments.

² See, e.g. Valerie Lacarte, *A Profile of the Growing Black Immigrant Population in the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, 7 (Feb. 2026)(showing Baltimore among the top 20 metropolitan areas for Black immigrants in the U.S.), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-black-immigrants-2026-final.pdf>.

³ Kate Amara and Khiree Stewart, 'It scares me': Marylanders protesting as data shows ICE arrests nearly tripled in 2025, WBALTV 11, Jan. 12, 2026 (citing to data collected by the Deportation Data Project that shows from January through October 2025, ICE arrested more than 3,300 people in Maryland compared to 1,165 during the same time period in the previous year.), <https://www.wbalTV.com/article/marylanders-protesting-data-ice-arrests-nearly-tripled-2025/69980610>.

⁴ Christine Condon, 'ICE out of Baltimore!': Recent immigration raids prompt Baltimore protest Local immigrant advocates cite 16 recent detentions at grocery stores and other locations, Maryland Matters, Jun. 12, 2025, <https://marylandmatters.org/2025/06/12/ice-raids-baltimore-protest-casa/>.

March 10, 2026
Ilana Ginsberg
Baltimore, MD 21217

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act**

TO: Chair Conway and members of the Public Safety Committee
FROM: Ilana Ginsberg

My name is Ilana Ginsberg. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 11. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act. I am an organizer with Jews United for Justice, a supporter of CASA, and a volunteer at a food bank which serves Afghan immigrants living in Baltimore City.

My ancestors fled antisemitic persecution in Eastern Europe. They left loved ones and everything familiar to escape violence. My life is a testament to the safe harbor my great grandparents found in the United States. Had they stayed in Poland and Ukraine, or been forced to return, they would have been subjected to state-promoted antisemitism, made to live in ghettos, and been threatened or killed in pogroms, anti-Jewish massacres. Had they survived those events, they most likely would have perished in the Holocaust.

Can you imagine fleeing your country of origin, your home, your loved ones, because your life is at risk, only to be treated like a criminal? Imagine facing separation from your children, fearing the brutal violence of federal officers, and deportation to the very place from which you risked everything to escape.

As ICE increases its presence in Baltimore, we should be doing everything in our power to protect immigrants in our city. We may not have the power to stop the reckless immigration policy in our country right now. We may not have the power to stop ICE altogether right now. But we DO have the power to protect immigrants by prohibiting local cooperation with federal immigration efforts. We DO have the power to protect immigrants' access to direct public services in Baltimore, by prohibiting discrimination based on immigration status.

This bill codifies immigrant protection measures in Baltimore City and is an important step towards protecting our immigrant neighbors, a step that is needed urgently. I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act. Additionally, I urge the council to follow the lead of cities like Chicago by continuing to support the immigrant community in this year's budget cycle with more funding for legal services and Know Your Rights canvassing and education materials.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

TO: Chair Conway and members of the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Janice Lynn Gordon

OPENING: My name is Janice Lynn Gordon. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 46. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.

I have called Baltimore home since 1976 when I arrived to study public health at Johns Hopkins University. Although I am now retired I continue to volunteer as a community mediator with organizations I see as catalysts for reducing the incidence of violence and violence-related trauma in our city. Through the efforts of city government and volunteer peace activists we have seen a reduction in gun-related violence and deaths. As we continue to work for greater reductions, we cannot allow a virulent form of violence and trauma to grow and fester against our immigrant neighbors, co-workers and classmates.

My own mother and all four grandparents were immigrants. As a member of the Jewish community I have used the lens of Jewish values, taught to me by my family, to evaluate current immigration enforcement. I have also gained insight through my participation with Jews United for Justice Baltimore.

It is our duty to protect the most vulnerable among us from abuse and victimization at the hands of our government entities at the city, state, and federal level. The passage of COUNCIL BILL 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act, will be a significant step toward preventing the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) agents from operating as engines of fear, racialized violence, and civil rights and constitutional abuses. By passing this bill, our neighbors can return to their jobs which help build our economy, observe religious practices which strengthens our

diversity, visit their doctors early which limits more expensive medical costs and send their children to school which builds a well educated local population. All of these things are good for our neighbors and equally good for our communities.

Under a federal consent decree, we've made progress in addressing a pattern of unconstitutional policing practices. We cannot turn our back on this progress now and must deny any support to federal immigration enforcement agents who fail to limit their actions.

Mayor Brandon Scott's Executive Order (EO) issued on March 4, 2026 in response to "reckless federal immigration enforcement" takes several steps to protect immigrants. While there is some overlap with the City Council's Safe Spaces and Communities Act I urge you to codify included protections especially the most rigorous protections for immigrants.

In closing I support this bill as I see it as an important step toward keeping Baltimore a united city that demonstrates we make the most progress when we move forward together. CLOSING: The closing paragraph should reiterate your position on the bill. Explain why you think the bill will be effective/ineffective, outcomes that the bill will achieve, etc., and end with a call to action. **I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

March 9, 2026
Theresa M. Hoffman
Towson, MD 21286

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

TO: Chair Conway and members of the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Theresa M. Hoffman

My name is Theresa M. Hoffman. I am a resident of Maryland District 43b. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.

I am a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore and deeply concerned with the abuses currently being propagated throughout our country by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). These organizations are using immigration enforcement as an excuse to

- terrorize immigrant communities
- harass people of color—especially Hispanic and Muslim people—regardless of their immigration status
- ignore due process
- commit violence against immigrants communities and against anyone standing up for their rights, as in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Minnesota.

It is vital that state, city, and local governments actively commit to supporting immigrant communities, protecting all Americans' right to due process, and refusing to carry out the Trump administration's inhumane deportation agenda.

The actions of ICE, CBP, and DHS cause immigrant communities to increasingly live in fear. Many people are afraid to go about daily activities such as grocery shopping or leaving the house to go to work. I know one young working mother of a four-year-old, a Spanish-speaking immigrant, who worries about whether it will even be safe to enroll her daughter in public school next year. No one should be subjected to this climate of fear and abuse.

As ICE's presence in Baltimore intensifies, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act proposes measures that would, among other safeguards:

- prohibit city agencies that provide direct public services—as well as entities that contract with the City to do so—from discriminating against someone based on their actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status

- limit city agencies, including the Baltimore Police Department (BPD), from cooperating with ICE or other DHS immigration enforcement actions and requiring BPD to deescalate life-threatening interactions between federal immigration agents and residents
- prohibit the sharing of information with federal immigration agents unless required by a law or court order;
- prohibit federal immigration officials from entering governmental spaces not open to the public without a court order or judicial warrant

In this moment, it is crucial to support all of our Baltimore neighbors—including our immigrant communities—by passing the Safe Spaces and Communities Act and immediately acting to fund and implement its initiatives. **I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

March 8, 2026

Testimony in support of Baltimore City Council Bill 26-0144 (Safe Spaces and Communities Act)

To: Public Safety Committee Chair Mark Conway and Vice Chair Zac Blanchard

From: Joan Jacobson

My name is Joan Jacobson. I am a resident of Lauraville in Councilmanic District 3 and have been a city property taxpayer for many decades.

As a member of Jews United for Justice, I urge you to pass this bill promptly, as a companion to Mayor Scott's Executive Order to control ICE's discriminatory, violent and unconstitutional activities as they arrest Baltimore residents without judicial warrants.

This bill will prohibit anyone in the city government (including police) from cooperating with federal immigration enforcement agents who detain citizens solely on civil immigration charges. It requires city agencies to develop plans in cooperation with the Mayor's office for Immigrant Affairs to bar immigration officials from entering any government space not accessible to the public without a judicial warrant.

It will prevent police from assisting ICE officers unless federal agents have judicial warrants. It will require local police to document ICE actions with their body cameras and demand names of people being detained, the credentials of ICE officers and the grounds for a detainee being held.

Although I agree with the mayor's Executive Order, I strongly prefer the strength, durability, and transparency of codifying protections for immigrants through this local ordinance.

Alexandra_Lazerow_26-0144_Support
March 10, 2026
Alexandra Lazerow
Baltimore, MD 21215

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL# 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

TO: Council President Cohen and members of the Baltimore City Council and the Public Safety Committee

FROM: Alexandra Lazerow

My name is Alexandra Lazerow. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 5. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Jews United for Justice, in support of Bill #26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act. JUFJ organizes 1,800 Jews and allies in Baltimore in support of social, racial, and economic justice campaigns.

Jewish values insist that we turn our historical experiences of being outsiders in foreign lands into compassion for those enduring the same today. We are obligated to make sure that those of us who were not born in our community are as safe as those who were.

Federal agents are assaulting, arresting, and disappearing immigrant Marylanders. There is reason to believe the crisis will deepen.

I have been volunteering in support of immigrants since I retired in 2018. I've taught computer, job search, English, and library skills.

A man who was in my first computer class is a torture survivor with long-term physical disabilities as a result. He followed all legal pathways to permanent residency and was living a stable life. Last summer, ICE agents dragged him out of his car as he was on his way to work, even as he told them he had legal status. In the chaotic assault, he was forced to leave behind his car, his job, his life in Baltimore. He is still in detention, without adequate medical care.

Two weeks ago a Central American woman went to a check-in at Hopkins Place and didn't return home. She too was sent to a detention facility in the South, torn from her husband and little children without warning.

Enforcing the requirements for judicial warrants and prohibiting racial profiling could provide some protection for immigrants trying to navigate daily life. Establishing policies and procedures for the BPD's interactions with ICE will certainly protect citizens, especially with the bill's deescalation measures. **We respectfully urge Council members to support this bill. Additionally, as we approach this year's budget season, please ensure there is adequate funding for direct services to our immigrant community.**

Written Testimony
Bill: **26-0144**
Position: **Favorable**

March 9, 2026

Dear Members of the City Council:

As a Baltimore resident, I am in favor of Bill 26-0144, Baltimore City Policies and Procedures – Safe Spaces and Communities.

Many of our immigrant neighbors, regardless of immigration status, are at a heightened safety risk due to aggressive policies and tactics from the federal government. Their ability to access city services and live their daily lives as city residents should be protected to the maximum extent possible. I am in support of this bill as it disentangles local policies and services from federal-level law enforcement, and I urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Little
881 W Lombard St
Baltimore, MD 21201



PA'LANTE PSYCHOTHERAPY
I n w a r d . U p w a r d . F o r w a r d .

March 9, 2026

In Support of: Bill 26-0144, Safe Spaces & Communities Act

Dear Baltimore City Council Public Safety Committee,

I'm writing in support of the proposed Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces & Communities Act, introduced by my District 14 Councilwoman, Odette Ramos. I'm a licensed clinical social worker with extensive experience providing trauma therapy to undocumented and asylee Spanish-speaking children, adolescents, adults, and families in community mental health center settings and public high schools. I also complete pro-bono asylum evaluations for Spanish-speaking immigrants.

Having borne witness to stories of the myriad heart-wrenching and life-changing traumas experienced by my clients before, during, and after their immigration experiences, it is imperative that we do all we can to support the safety and stability of the lives of our community members here in Baltimore. Safety and stability provide conditions for people to heal from trauma and to engage meaningfully in civic life.

In particular, the children in our community need protection from their own deportation and/or immigration-related incarceration and from unnecessary traumatic familial separation via deportation and/or immigration-related incarceration of a caregiver, which only perpetuate cycles of intergenerational trauma and erode the integrity of our communities in the long-term. These overwhelming experiences, in turn, often cause or exacerbate mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and PTSD. Our children deserve our proactive protection. These negative outcomes are optional.

I urge you to pass this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jess M. Jones, LCSW-C
MD #28321

Holly_Powell_26-0141_Support

March 10, 2026

Holly Powell

Baltimore, Maryland 21224

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

To: Chair Conway and Members of the Public Safety Committee

From: Holly Powell

My name is Holly Powell and I am a resident of Baltimore City District One (1). I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144 the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.

I am a Baltimore City Public Schools School Social Worker assigned to an early elementary school. My children are students in Baltimore City Public Schools. I am a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and I am submitting this testimony in collaboration with the Collaboration for Justice Safety and Jobs (CJSJ).

In my work and personal life, I have experienced people who live in genuine fear for doing nothing than wanting better for themselves, and more frequently, for their families. They come from countries that have experienced devastation and trauma in so many different ways that they have become unlivable. These are people who are active contributors to our country and economy, often getting little in return in terms of benefits besides the basic ability to survive and support themselves. No one should have to live in fear of being kidnapped off of the street with no means to communicate to anyone what has happened to them and then have to stay in conditions not fit for human occupation. Not to mention, these are people who have no criminal records and are no threat to the community. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have shown themselves to be violent, racist and purveyors of fear with face masks and their tactics of engagement. Living in this fear restricts the ability for those that may be targeted to report abuses that they may experience against their children, themselves, domestic violence, etc. which does not contribute to a safer society.

For these reasons, I support the passage of Bill 26-0144. Creating an atmosphere of fear and hostility, as has been seen throughout the country, is not something that should be brought to Baltimore. Baltimore has had to work hard, and continues to do so, to overcome it's history of police brutality and racist practices. Cooperation with ICE would only take the city and it's communities backwards. **I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

Date of Public Hearing: March 10, 2026

Kathy Shulman, Co-Lead, Immigration Working Group, Indivisible Baltimore
Baltimore, MD, 21210

TESTIMONY IN (SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144, Baltimore City Policies and Procedures - Safe Spaces and Communities.

TO: Council President Cohen and members of the Baltimore City Council

FROM: Kathy Shulman

My name is Kathy Shulman. I am a resident of Baltimore City, residing in District 14. I am submitting this testimony in support of **Bill 26-0144, Baltimore City Policies and Procedures - Safe Spaces and Communities.** And I do so, both as a Baltimore resident and as the Co-Lead of the Immigration Working Group of Indivisible Baltimore

Thank you, City Council members Gray, Parker and Ramos, for sponsoring this legislation.

Indivisible Baltimore's is a unified coalition of diverse Baltimore residents who aim to connect, build, and support our community to uphold democracy, justice, and human dignity. We hold local, state and national leaders accountable, protecting the vulnerable, and strengthening democratic participation. Through empathy, education, and nonviolent resistance, we build bridges across political and social divides—because real change happens when we listen, learn, and act together. To date, we represent more than 2700 Baltimore City residents.

A priority pillar of our work is to protect our immigrant neighbors here in Baltimore and immigrants across Maryland who are unjustly and illegally detained and deported by the Department of Homeland Security.

We support this legislation because it codifies the [executive order](#) that Mayor Brandon Scott recently signed, **Protecting the Rights and Well-Being of Baltimore City**. This bill also ties the mayor's executive order to Baltimore City Police Department policies that relate to their relationship with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

We believe in the goals of this legislation and the mayor's executive order to implement restrictions spanning city government in its interactions with the work of DHS. And we also applaud the fact that, except for where it is required by federal or state law, the bill would bar Baltimore Police from cooperating with federal immigration enforcement actions, ban the city from collecting and sharing data related to immigration status, and restrict spending on actions related to immigration enforcement.

We are proud that Baltimore City, through the bold actions of Mayor Scott and the leaders in the City Council, have created better relations between our communities and members of the Baltimore City Police Department. Community members now know that they are protected by laws and policies should any police harassment occur. And so, not partnering with ICE where it is able, will help to continue this building trust between the BCPD and all of our residents.

I respectfully urge Councilmembers to support this important bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathy Shulman

kathyshulman@proton.me

410-303-5037

March 10, 2026

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act

TO: Chair Conway and members of the Public Safety Committee

My name is Taylor Smith-Hams. I am a resident of Baltimore City District 14. I am submitting this testimony in support of Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.

ICE is terrorizing our communities. As our elected leaders, you must do everything in your power to protect our community members who are being directly targeted, as well as to protect all of our rights to protest their horrific actions.

I have accompanied some of my neighbors to their ICE check-ins at the Fallon Building downtown. It is difficult for me to describe the horror and the trauma that is forced upon people who are simply trying to follow the rules they were told to follow.

I have witnessed mothers sobbing as they were told by cruel, stonefaced agents that they must leave the country and make the agonizing decision of whether to bring their children with them to places they fled or whether to be separated from them in order to leave them here for the better life they sought.

I have watched people sit on the floor waiting for hours for their names to be called, not knowing whether this will be a procedural check-in or the last time they will be free in our city.

I have watched people be disappeared into the depths of the Fallon building.

I have watched crates of water bottles and bags of sandwich bread be rolled through doors that don't open again.

I have seen things that I cannot unsee. And these things are happening in the heart of downtown Baltimore.

This is shameful.

We are living through a horrific period in our country's history. Make sure you're on the right side and that you do everything in your power to stop ICE from kidnapping Baltimoreans, destroying families, traumatizing children, and ripping apart our communities.

Codifying basic protections for our immigrant neighbors and everyone who is being racially profiled by ICE is a necessary first step. **I respectfully urge the council to support Bill 26-0144, the Safe Spaces and Communities Act.**

Sincerely,

Taylor Smith-Hams

Immigration Hearing_Baltimore City Council.

Good afternoon. My name is Vince Tola. I am an ESOL teacher at Patterson High School in East Baltimore. I have taught at Patterson every school year since 2010. It's my home and my community ... At Patterson, we have wonderfully diverse staff and student population. We have speakers of Arabic, Swahili, Tigrinya, Tagalog, Spanish, Yoruba and other languages. Nearly half the student population was born outside of the United States or come from households where a language other than English is spoken at home. ... And I think anyone who has been part of this community recognizes its value ... there is beauty, there is strength, there is opportunity when you have diversity and you embrace it ... You can build off the assets that these students and their families bring ... And when you do that, you strengthen Baltimore.

I want to thank the Council for the resolution. I support it. ... I think that most of us here feel solidarity with immigrants in the United States, if we're not immigrants ourselves or come from immigrant families. My grandfather immigrated to New York City from Ecuador in the 1950s. He wanted to learn English so as to improve his business skills. In Ecuador, his education was in Accounting, and so in the U.S. he worked as a bookkeeper for clothing company – I believe in the Bronx. After living here a few years, he brought over his family and extended family. My dad was 6 years old when he arrived in the Bronx in 1956. He came in search of ice cream and popsicles, and he was NOT disappointed. My grandparents eventually became legal permanent residents and my dad became a U.S. citizen when he was 17, just before going to college. He was drafted during the Vietnam era. Lucky for him, the war ended before he was sent to Vietnam, but while in the army, he met a lovely Irish gal from Staten Island, NY, who was an army nurse stationed at the same base. They got married, eventually moved out to western Maryland in the 1980s, and raised 4 kids. So, I grew up in western MD, but I came here to Baltimore in 1995 to attend Loyola College (now Loyola University). I graduated in '99 and like grandfather before me, I decided to stay. So, I made Baltimore my home and the rest is history.

But, you know, back when my grandfather migrated in the 1950s, it was much easier to immigrate to the U.S. through a legal route. ... The option that my grandfather had just hasn't been available to most people who have arrived on the southern border in the past 25 years.

And now, I'd like to get political. I think we need to recognize ourselves as immigrant solidarity advocates. There are a growing number of us. The majority of us, I imagine, are Democrats. I, myself, am a political independent, who is registered to vote as Green Party member. However, I think we're likely to send Mr. Mfume back to Congress, along with a Democratic majority ... Yes, it is likely that the Democrats will win back Congress, in part, due to America's recognition that ICE is out of control. What do we, immigrant solidarity advocates, expect of any Congressional candidate ... before they gain our full support?

I think we need commitments on concrete policy positions. The Democrats, especially, need to know what we expect them to do.

1. First, no more funding for ICE or CBP. "Abolish ICE" is not simply a slogan. It is a concrete policy framework. When you have a rogue, reckless agency that is killing people and harming lives, including American lives, you need to disband it. Break it apart and recreate entirely new agency

with new staff that does what we want it to do, which is try to stop drugs and human trafficking from crossing our borders. *Work in coordination with law enforcement in other nations to apprehend violent criminals, sex traffickers and multinational criminal organizations ... people who are actively engaging in terrorist plots. That's who should be apprehended ... But no more picking up people off the streets because they have an accent. Mass deportation is OVER... Yes, we need an agency at the border that stops people from unlawful entry, but ICE and Border Patrol, in their current forms, must be abolished.

2. This has to be combined with actual, immigration reform. I want more of us to be talking about EXPANDED LEGAL PATHWAYS, pathways to citizenship, and that we need to END MASS UNDOCUMENT STATUS.

There's a good framework for doing this. It's called the U.S. Citizenship Act, HR 3194. It was introduced by Representative Linda Sanchez in 2023. Maybe Mr. Mfume should have a look at it. Here's what it does:

- If you have lived in the U.S. for 5 years or more, and you pass a background check and pay all your taxes/fees/etc, you become an LPI, a Lawful Prospective Immigrant. You will not be subject to deportation. After 5 years, you can apply to become an LPR, a Legal Permanent Resident, like my grandfather. After 5 more years, you can apply for citizenship.
- For those who have been here less than 5 years, there are expanded options through family reunification, asylum, or other avenues. Not everyone would gain a legal status, but many would, and we would greatly reduce the number of people even eligible for deportation.

*So, we would have more workers and their families with legal status, who pay all the same taxes and are subject to all the same laws as the rest of us. So many people could come out of the shadows and fully participate in American life without the fear of arrest and deportation. This is good for America.

- And there would be expanded legal options for future immigrants. So, we would have a system that discourages illegal immigration and encourages legal immigration up to an optimal point. And that's what we really want. Healthy levels of legal immigration.

We really need to put forth our vision for America. The best version of America:

- Has a strong Bill of Rights.
- Protects the Constitutional rights and human **dignity** of all people within our borders.
- Maintains a robust, humanitarian immigration system that welcomes New Americans.

That's why I became an ESOL teacher. I wanted to welcome Newcomers to our nation, learn from them, and show them the best version of America. I think we can do that now. We can lay the groundwork that brings us to that vision. We need keep at it. Start talking about expanded legal pathways, ending mass undocumented status and healthy levels of legal immigration. We will get there ... *I thank you, for this opportunity to speak.*

Dear City Council Members,

I am testifying in support of 26-0144 Safe Spaces legislation.

As the granddaughter of immigrants, I feel immensely grateful that our country offered a safe haven for my ancestors. As a former exchange student, I appreciated the warm welcome I received from my host family and community in Ecuador. As a proud American, I am horrified and embarrassed by the behavior of my own government in recent months towards immigrants.

Our city Baltimore was built by immigrants. The native persons who originally lived here have long been outnumbered by folks from Europe, from Africa, from South America, from other corners of the world. We would not have the thriving port culture or the thriving arts culture or the thriving food culture or so many other aspects of our city were it not for our immigrant ancestors or our current immigrant neighbors.

This bill simply tries to make this city welcoming to our neighbors. It codifies how our local Baltimore law enforcement may and may not coordinate with federal ICE agents. It prohibits discrimination against people simply because of their perceived immigration status. It honors our immigrant ancestors by doing these common sense things.

I urge you, as a proud American and a proud Baltimorean, to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Jan Kleinman

250 President ST Unit 508

Baltimore, MD 21202



Testimony on Baltimore City Council Bill # 26-0144
Safe Spaces and Communities Act
Position: **FAV**

To Mr. President and Members of the Baltimore City Council,

My name is Brige Dumais and I am the Political Coordinator of 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East. We are the largest healthcare workers union in the nation, representing 5,000 members who work in Baltimore City's hospitals, nursing homes, and health clinics. Furthermore, 1199 is a co-founding member of the Campaign for Justice, Safety & Jobs, a coalition of faith, labor, and civil rights organizations that convened in April 2015 to address the systemic injustices unearthed by Freddie Gray's police-involved killing and the subsequent uprising throughout Baltimore City.

1199SEIU urges the Council to issue a **favorable** report on the Safe Spaces and Communities Act, and to ensure there is **robust funding** to properly implement the bill. This legislation is critical for ensuring that Baltimore City is not contributing to the federal government's attacks on workers, patients, neighbors, and loved ones. The current political climate is already causing many Marylanders to fear accessing necessary healthcare, leading some to delay care and increasing the risk of more serious health complications.

With this bill in place, directly impacted communities may feel less fearful seeking healthcare, and healthcare workers will feel more confident that they are able to safely connect their patients with needed city services. Please vote YES on the Safe Spaces and Communities Act and support it with funding. Thank you.

In Unity,

Brige Dumais
brigitte.dumais@1199.org