
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

HEARING NOTES

26-0144

Baltimore City Policies and Procedures - Safe Spaces and Communities

Hearing Date: 3/10/2026

Hearing Start Time: 1:00 PM

Hearing End Time: 3:30 PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Estimated Attendance: 75

Committee Members in Attendance:

- **Chair** Mark Conway
- **Vice Chair** Zac Blanchard
- Paris Gray

Additional Councilmembers in Attendance

- Zeke Cohen
 - Odette Ramos
 - Mark Parker
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MAJOR SPEAKERS

(This is NOT an attendance record.)

- Catalina Rodriguez-Lima – Director, Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs
 - Erin Murphy – Chief of Staff, Baltimore City Police Department
 - Hilary Ruley – Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division, Baltimore City Law Department
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NOTES

- Chair Conway
 - Today’s hearing will be simultaneously translated into Spanish
 - Introduced committee members and other council people in attendance
- Councilman Parker provided additional instructions in Spanish
- Chair Conway discussed the broader context that brought us here
 - Immigration enforcement historically was handled by civil agencies
 - After 9/11, immigration was pulled into a national security framework which led to the creation of ICE
 - Introduced militarization of immigration enforcement

- Today we see those risks played out
- ICE has evolved beyond its original mission
 - It functions like a paramilitary force with sweeping power and very limited accountability
- The current administration is lawlessly using that power to undermine public safety
- Public safety depends on trust
- ICE has evolved into something incompatible with a democratic society
- We can decide whether Baltimore will provide support, coordination, or assistance
 - This bill says no
- We will hear today from residents and experts
- Council President
 - Thanks to the bill sponsors Ramos, Parker, Gray
 - Thanks to Mayor Scott and MIMA
 - This is a moment where the entire team is standing united
 - Just yesterday, we stood with the federal delegation outside of the Fallon building
 - The history books will remember who stood up and fought
 - The 74th City Council is always going to fight for every single resident we serve
 - If you want to contribute to our city, you will always be welcome
 - Mayor Scott has been clear that Baltimore will remain a welcoming city
 - But it is not about us, we are legislators who need to legislate
 - The next mayor can always rescind an executive order – we need to codify the things we do in this chamber and in the City
 - Rejects an argument that there is no role for the local city council in protecting our neighbors
 - The President made a commitment to go after the worst of the worst then did the exact opposite
 - That does not make America safe
 - Baltimore has been driving down violent crime
 - We don't need marauding ICE agents causing chaos to keep us safe – we can do it on our own
 - We know that we have a shared commitment across our agencies
 - BPD has been clear that we will not assist in immigration enforcement
 - But if there is ever new leadership at those agencies, that can change
 - We must codify in our law what city agencies need to do
 - This is a moment when Baltimoreans are standing united
 - Baltimore is a welcoming city for all people
 - And it will stay that way as long as all of us are around
- Councilman Gray
 - This bill is not radical or anti-law enforcement
 - The role of local policing is to serve and protect the people of the city
 - As we speak, egregious civil rights violations are occurring in cities around the country
 - Due process is being stripped away
 - This is not immigration enforcement, this is a constitutional crisis
 - Enforcement of racial profiling as policy
 - The deputization of local police to carry out federal immigration enforcement destroys community trust

- Baltimore has a well-documented history of law enforcement being used as a sword against residents, rather than a shield
- The trust we have is fragile, hard won, and still being built
- We cannot build safe communities when populations live in fear
- Violent crime rates increase in cities where immigrants fear police contact
- This bill does NOT protect those with violent criminal actions from accountability
- This does ensure our city is not used to conduct immigration enforcement
- This bill ensures government is not weaponized against our neighbors
- Consider – what is the rule of law for if not to protect the most vulnerable
- This bill is an act of Baltimore’s long history of civil courage and resistant
- Councilman Parker
 - This is part of our responsibility to protect residents
 - This is needed to respond to a relentless increase in immigration enforcement
 - Our neighbors are afraid to leave their houses
 - A step to reaffirm Baltimore as a welcoming city
 - Unfortunately, things are getting worse
 - The reality ahead of us looms large
 - This bill clarifies that Baltimore will not assist or support immigration enforcement actions
 - This is consistent with our city’s strong leadership
 - Times like this reveal who we are – Baltimore stands strong with our neighbors of all backgrounds
- Councilwoman Ramos
 - This is deeply personal
 - It is horrifying to see community members snatched off the street because their skin is darker and they have an accent
 - It is painful to hear the stories and see the videos of people experiencing separation from their children
 - People came here to build a better life, because they believe in the promise of the United States
 - This bill makes it very clear, the behavior of immigration enforcement is not acceptable
 - We will not stand for it
 - Our city government will ensure that we will not be accomplice to these actions
 - We must be leaders
 - ICE is already here, terrorizing families
 - It may be that there is more coming, we have to be ready
 - Summary of bill
 - Every agency of city government will have an immigration enforcement action response plan
 - Require that immigration enforcement agencies cannot make use of any city facilities, funds, or agreements (except for those instances where doing so is required by a judicial warrant or court order)
 - Prevent information sharing with immigration officials
 - Prevent BPD participation in immigration enforcement actions
 - BPD must come up with its own training for these circumstances
 - BPD will engage in de-escalation
 - Prohibit discrimination based on immigration status

- Create training for city employees
 - This codifies existing practices of BPD and city government
- Public Testimony
 - Chair Conway read statements submitted to his office
 - Asylum seeker - During a check in he was transferred to a detention center and an immigration judge closed his asylum case
 - School teacher – attendance has dropped and children of immigrants are withdrawn
 - Baltimore first responder on Fallon building conditions – inhumane, immoral – employees were unconcerned and the facilities were filthy
 - 37 people held in a room the size of the average row home living room
 - Legal professionals expressed support for the bill
 - One LGBTQ+ resident said that they can be themselves here but were not able to in their country of origin
 - A resident expressed a desire for public education on the available resources
 - Stephen Kane
 - Conditions in detention centers present a major public health concern
- Agency Reports
 - BPD
 - Existing policy in place, requests that the bill reflects the language of BPD’s policy
 - MIMA
 - LAW
 - Sponsor’s amendments address the concerns of the Law department
 - Finance
 - Defer to Law
 - OECR
- Questions
 - Conway
 - Proposed amendment would prevent ICE from staging on city properties
 - LAW – parks are a public forum and we cannot regulate use based on speech
 - That analysis is seemingly at odds with the Mayor’s recent executive order
 - An executive order is not a law
 - Ramos
 - Law also requested an amendment regarding bill provisions compelling action by third parties
 - MIMA
 - Currently the bill is modeled on language access – what has the progress been thus far to ensure agencies comply
 - Based on existing work, this models will be replicated and strengthened
 - BPD
 - What are BPD’s duties
 - Expansive and worked through the consent decree
 - Does not partner with ICE or any immigration enforcement unless put in as a 911 call
 - Parker

Vote Record in bill file? ----- **YES** **NO** **N/A**
Agency reports read? ----- **YES** **NO** **N/A**
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ----- **YES** **NO** **N/A**
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the bill file? ----- **YES** **NO** **N/A**
Evidence of notification to property owners in bill file? ----- **YES** **NO** **N/A**

Notes by: Ethan Navarre
Notes Date: 3/10/2026

Direct Inquiries to: Ethan.Navarre@baltimorecity.gov