

February 27, 2020

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THINK JEWISHLY. ACT LOCALLY.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB649

Public Information Act – Motor Vehicle Administration – Warrant for Personal Information and Reporting

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Jonathan Schwartz, on behalf of Jews United for Justice

My name is Jonathan Schwartz and I am a resident of District 10 in Baltimore County. I am providing this testimony in support of SB649 on behalf of Jews United for Justice. JUFJ organizes 5,000 people across the state of Maryland to help win social, racial and economic justice campaigns. All people have a right to be safe and to thrive in our state, regardless of immigration status or documentation. All of our families, unless we are Native Americans, trace their origins to another country, and likely another continent.

Maryland granted drivers licenses to undocumented residents with assurances that their information would not be used against them. Yet, the Motor Vehicle Administration's database and records can be searched by all federal law enforcement agencies, including ICE. SB649 would prohibit ICE from accessing MVA records for civil immigration enforcement purposes, thereby maintaining the trust of all people who have obtained Maryland drivers licenses.

I am Jewish. My tradition teaches that it is our responsibility to welcome migrants. Jews have been persecuted for our religious beliefs and had to flee in order to save our lives and the lives of our children many times in our history. We have been seen as foreigners in the places we have called home for centuries. Antisemitism is on the rise today, so I am increasingly aware of how people seek to divide us as Americans and cause people to fear and discriminate against other human beings who simply want to support their family and live peacefully.

Our country was founded as a haven for migrants. Our economic and social fabric have been shaped by the energy and innovation of each generation of new Americans. The most American thing that we can do is welcome migrants. The most noble thing we can do is support our fellow human beings in their time of need, rather than add to their suffering. I am proud to support the efforts of CASA and JUFJ's other coalition partners by supporting this legislation and amplifying the voices of those being forced to live in the shadows.

Thank you to Delegate Stein and Senator Lam for their leadership on this important issue. **I ask all of you to return a favorable report on SB649.**