

**ORAL TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB388 – Criminal Procedure –
Civil Immigration Enforcement - Restrictions**

My name is Holly Syrrakos and I live in Takoma Park. I am speaking in support of House Bill 388.

I represent Takoma Park Mobilization, an advocacy organization with more than 1,700 members in the Takoma Park-Silver Spring area. Our part of Montgomery County has a high population density that includes a large number of immigrants.

HB388 would prohibit police from carrying out the duties of Immigration Agents—it would stop police from inquiring about immigration status during any public interaction. We should not burden our already-busy police forces with tasks for which they are neither trained nor improve public safety.

Enacting HB388 will increase trust between our immigrant communities and the police. Immigrants are often reluctant to report crimes because they fear deportation. We know that in parts of our state, law enforcement actively cooperates with immigration authorities to detain and deport people for reasons as insignificant as a speeding ticket. This situation does not make anyone safer.

On a personal note, I support HB388 because three of my grandparents were immigrants. They entered the U.S. at Ellis Island and were soon naturalized—because there was a quick and easy path to citizenship, something that is no longer true. My grandparents had a lot to worry about, but they didn't have to worry about being deported. They didn't have to live in fear of being victimized and having nowhere to turn.

Vilification of immigrants is nothing new in the U.S. but in the past decade, it seems to have been elevated to an art form. As legislators, you have the ability to enact laws that allow residents to fully participate in civic life. You can make peoples' lives easier or harder.

I urge you to support HB388 to make all of our lives better and our communities safer. Thank you.