GO/PS Item #2
October 1, 2026
Worksession

M E M O R A N D U M

September 28, 2026

TO: Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee
Public Safety (PS) Committee

FROM: Christine Wellons, Chief Legislative Attorney

SUBJECT: Expedited Bill 29-26, Personnel and Human Resources – Eligibility for County Employment ("Community Trust in County Employees Act")

PURPOSE: Worksession – recommendation expected

Expected Attendees
Luisa Cardona, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
Sam Frushour, Office of Human Resources
Shantée Jackson, Office of Management and Budget

Expedited Bill 29-26, Personnel and Human Resources – Eligibility for County Employment ("Community Trust in County Employees Act"), was introduced on June 16, 2026. The Lead Sponsor is Councilmember Mink. Councilmember Jawando is a Co-Sponsor. A public hearing occurred on July 14, 2026.

The expedited bill would:

(1) alter eligibility requirements for County employment;
(2) restrict the hiring for County employment of individuals who carried out certain activities during federal employment; and
(3) generally amend the law regarding personnel and human resources.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of Expedited Bill 29-26 would be to increase community trust in County government by restricting the County from hiring individuals who were employed by the federal government after 2025 to enforce federal immigration laws.

BILL SPECIFICS

The expedited bill would make the following legislative findings:

(1) Community trust in the fairness and impartiality of County employees is essential to promote public health and safety and to assure all residents' access to County resources.

(2) Since 2025, federal government agencies have routinely and pervasively enforced civil immigration laws in a discriminatory manner and without due process. These federal practices have eroded community trust in public servants at all levels of government, including the County government.

(3) County offices and departments that directly serve the public, such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Montgomery County Public Libraries, cannot fulfill their missions and responsibilities to the public without earning and maintaining the trust of the community.

(4) Community trust in County government will stabilize and grow if the County prohibits the hiring of individuals who participated in a discriminatory and unconstitutionally administered federal immigration system.

Based upon the findings, the expedited bill would restrict certain public-facing County departments from hiring "restricted applicants" who participated in immigration enforcement.

The affected County departments would include: Office of Community Partnerships; Community Use of Public Facilities; Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Housing and Community Affairs; Department of Permitting Services; Department of Transportation; Regional Services Centers; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services; Montgomery County Police Department; Montgomery County Public Libraries; Montgomery County Recreation; Office of Consumer Protection; Office of Grants Management; Office of Human Resources; and Office of Human Rights.

In general, the term "restricted applicant" would be defined as an individual:

- employed by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on or after October 1, 2025; or

- employed or contracted by, and assigned by, the U.S. government on or after October 1, 2025, to support, direct, administer, aid, or otherwise participate in the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

SUMMARY OF IMPACT STATEMENTS

Fiscal Impact. The Office of Management and Budget estimates that Expedited Bill 29-26 will cost the County approximately $452,619 annually beginning in FY27, totaling roughly $2.26 million through FY31, with no anticipated revenue impact. The primary driver is the need

for three permanent additional HR Specialists to handle expanded applicant screening and eligibility determinations, at a combined cost of approximately $432,619 per year. One-time implementation costs include contractor support for a position analysis and overtime for updating job postings, estimated at $20,000 and $760 respectively. The bill is also expected to cause recruitment delays of several weeks to several months due to the verification requirements, which will require additional staffing and operations resources to mitigate these impacts. The projection does not capture potential additional costs to MCPD, Recreation, the Sheriff's Office, or other departments with delegated hiring responsibilities.

Economic Impact. When available: Racial Equity and Social Justice, Economic, and Climate Impact Statements - Office of Legislative Oversight - Montgomery County, MD.

Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact. "The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 could have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Banning job applicants who have participated in recent immigration enforcement from frontline County positions could help improve perceptions among immigrant community members that address their growing distrust and disengagement in local government. OLO also recognizes Bill 29-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx."

Climate assessment. "The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing restrictions on the hiring of federal immigration officers in certain County positions."

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Council held a public hearing on Expedited Bill 29-26 on July 14, 2026. The Council also received additional written testimony as part of the record. Testimony was largely in support of Expedited Bill 29-26.

Supporters argued that the bill is necessary to preserve community trust in County government, particularly among immigrant families who have experienced trauma as a result of federal immigration enforcement. Speakers emphasized that when residents fear those providing County services, residents are less likely to seek healthcare, report crimes, enroll their children in programs, or access food and housing assistance. Supporters also raised concerns about ICE and CBP hiring practices, accounts of excessive force, inadequate vetting, and the detention of U.S. citizens. CASA described the bill as a necessary continuation of Montgomery County's longstanding commitment to protecting immigrant families and reinforcing a clear separation between local government and federal immigration enforcement.

One individual testified in opposition arguing that the bill creates a blanket prohibition that is inconsistent with Bill 18-26, which would establish a screening process for certain law enforcement applicants. [1]

ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE'S CONSIDERATION

1. **Legislation in Other Jurisdictions**

Several state legislatures – including the Maryland General Assembly – have introduced legislation that would restrict the hiring of certain federal employees by state agencies.

The Maryland ICE Breaker Act, House Bill 832, would have provided that "a state law enforcement agency may not hire for employment an individual who was hired as a sworn officer of United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement on or after January 20, 2025."

Legislatures in California, Rhode Island, Washington State, and New Jersey have introduced similar legislation. *See* California bill would ban current ICE employees from police officer, teacher jobs; Democrats in four states seek to bar ICE employees from future civil service jobs | Democrats | The Guardian; https://fallriverreporter.com/democrats-push-bill-that-would-ban-ice-agents-from-becoming-police-officers-in-rhode-island/.

In the City of Los Angeles, the City Council has enacted a law to prohibit City employees from "moonlighting" in federal immigration jobs. LA bans city employees from federal immigration jobs | LA Local

2. **Scope: Definition of "Restricted Applicant"**

The bill would define "restricted applicant" broadly to include any person "employed or contracted by, and assigned by, the U.S. government on or after October 1, 2025, to support, direct, administer, aid, or otherwise participate in the enforcement of federal immigration laws."

The Committee might wish to discuss the scope of this definition and how the definition would be implemented by the Office of Human Resources (OHR). How would OHR identify restricted applicants?

3. **Potential Recruitment Delays**

The Fiscal Impact Statement noted that Bill 29-26 could cause recruitment delays of several weeks to months in the County hiring process. The Committee might wish to ask OHR to elaborate regarding the effects of the bill on the hiring process and timeline.

Next Step: Recommendation on whether to enact Expedited Bill 29-26.

[1] Bill 18-26 (known as the "Continued Excellence in Public Service Act") would require that prior to extending a final offer of employment to any individual who (1) worked as a federal law enforcement office for DHS or an agency subcomponent (2) on or after January 21, 2025, and (3) who engaged in deportation, expulsion, or removal operations during that time; the Montgomery County Police Department must review and verify certain information related to the candidate.

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Expedited Bill No. 29-26
Concerning: Personnel and Human Resources – Eligibility for County Employment ("Community Trust in County Employees Act")
Revised: 6/16/2026 Draft No. 2
Introduced:
Expires: December 7, 2026
Enacted:
Executive:
Effective:
Sunset Date:
Ch. _____, Laws of Mont. Co. _____

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Mink
Co-Sponsor: Councilmember Jawando

AN EXPEDITED ACT to:

(1) alter eligibility requirements for County employment;
(2) restrict the hiring for County employment of individuals who carried out certain activities during federal employment; and
(3) generally amend the law regarding personnel and human resources.

By amending
Montgomery County Code
Chapter 33, Personnel and Human Resources
Sections 33-31, 33-32, and 33-33

Boldface	*Heading or defined term.*
Underlining	*Added to existing law by original bill.*
[Single boldface brackets**]**	*Deleted from existing law by original bill.*
Double underlining	*Added by amendment.*
[[Double boldface brackets**]]**	*Deleted from existing law or the bill by amendment.*
* * *	*Existing law unaffected by bill.*

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following Act:

Sec. 1. Sections 33-31, 33-32, and 33-33 are amended as follows:

33-31. Eligibility for County Employment – Consideration of Prior Employment

(a) *Findings*.

(1) Community trust in the fairness and impartiality of County employees is essential to promote public health and safety and to assure all residents' access to County resources.

(2) Since 2025, federal government agencies have routinely and pervasively enforced civil immigration laws in a discriminatory manner and without due process. These federal practices have eroded community trust in public servants at all levels of government, including the County government.

(3) County offices and departments that directly serve the public, such as the Department of Health and Human Services and the Montgomery County Public Libraries, cannot fulfill their missions and responsibilities to the public without earning and maintaining the trust of the community.

(4) Community trust in County government will stabilize and grow if the County prohibits the hiring of individuals who participated in a discriminatory and unconstitutionally administered federal immigration system.

(b) *Definitions*. For purposes of this Section, the following terms have the meanings indicated.

(1) *Direct services agency* means the:

(A) Office of Community Partnerships;

(B) Community Use of Public Facilities;

(C) Department of Environmental Protection;

(D) Department of Health and Human Services;

(E) Department of Housing and Community Affairs;

(F) Department of Permitting Services;

(G) Department of Transportation;

(H) Regional Services Centers;

(I) Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation;

(J) Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services;

(K) Montgomery County Police Department;

(L) Montgomery County Public Libraries;

(M) Montgomery County Recreation;

(N) Office of Consumer Protection;

(O) Office of Grants Management;

(P) Office of Human Resources; and

(Q) Office of Human Rights.

(2) *Restricted applicant* means an individual:

(A) employed by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on or after October 1, 2025; or

(B) employed or contracted by, and assigned by, the U.S. government on or after October 1, 2025 to support, direct, administer, aid, or otherwise participate in the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

Restricted applicant does not include an individual described under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph (2) whose employment or contract with the U.S. government ended on or before 6 months after the start of their assignment.

(3) *Sensitive position* means a County job position:

(A) within a direct services agency; and

(B) identified by the Office of Human Resources as having:

(i) regular interaction with the public; or

(ii) decision-making authority over access to or distribution of public resources.

(c) *Hiring restriction*. A direct services agency must not hire a restricted applicant to fill a sensitive position.

(d) *Job postings*. The Office of Human Resources must include within a job posting whether the requirements of this Section apply to the position.

(e) *Regulations*. The Executive may promulgate Method (1) regulations necessary to implement the requirements of this Section.

[33-31] 33-32—33-33. Reserved.

Sec. 2. Expedited Effective Date. The Council declares that this legislation is necessary for the immediate protection of the public interest. This Act takes effect on the date on which it becomes law.

Sec. 3. Short Title. This bill may be known as the "Community Trust in County Employees Act."

Fiscal Impact Statement

Office of Management and Budget

Bill 29-26E	**Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment ("Community Trust in County Employees Act")**
Bill Summary	Expedited Bill 29-26 would prohibit the County from hiring individuals for certain jobs in specific public-facing departments if those individuals were employed by federal immigration-enforcement agencies, or performed certain functions related to the enforcement of federal immigration laws in other government agencies or by contract on or after October 1,2025. The bill mandates that the Office of Human Resources (OHR) clearly indicate on job postings whether this restriction applies. "Restricted applicant" includes individuals who: - Worked for the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on or after October 1, 2025; or - Were employed or contracted by the U.S. government after that date to support, direct, administer, aid, or participate in immigration-enforcement activities. The prohibition applies to positions within designated direct-service County departments, including: Office of Community Partnerships; Community Use of Public Facilities; Department of Environmental Protection; Department of Health and Human Services; Department of Housing and Community Affairs; Department of Permitting Services; Department of Transportation; Regional Services Centers; Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services; Montgomery County Police Department; Montgomery County Public Libraries; Montgomery County Recreation; Office of Consumer Protection; Office of Grants Management; Office of Human Resources; and Office of Human Rights. Positions subject to the restriction are those OHR officially designates as "sensitive", meaning roles involving regular public interaction or decision-making authority over public services or resources.
Fiscal Impact Summary	The impact on County expenditures is estimated at $452,619 in FY27. Inflationary adjustments are excluded from this projection. As a result, out-year expenditures may increase beyond current estimates once annual cost-growth factors are applied. This Bill is not expected to have an impact on revenue. The Office of Human Resources (OHR) anticipates that implementation of the bill will impact several areas as described below.

Fiscal Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Total
Personnel Costs	$0	$432,619	$432,619	$432,619	$432,619	$432,619	$2,163,095
Operating Expenses	$0	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$20,000	$100,000
Total Expenditures	**$0**	**$452,619**	**$452,619**	**$452,619**	**$452,619**	**$452,619**	**$2,263,095**
Revenues	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Total Impact	**$0**	**($452,619)**	**($452,619)**	**($452,619)**	**($452,619)**	**($452,619)**	**($2,263,095)**

FTE	0.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00

Fiscal Impact Analysis

This legislation is expected to have an adverse impact on the County's recruitment and selection processes due to delays associated with the bill's new screening requirements. OHR anticipates that additional staffing and operational resources will be needed to manage and mitigate these impacts. Examples of primary and secondary areas of impact include:

Extra Staff Time and Special Processing Requirements
To conduct the anticipated increase in screening activities including verification of applicant employment histories, eligibility determinations, and eligible list creation, OHR reports that three additional Human Resources (HR) Specialists will be required. Because the bill does not include a sunset provision on the enhanced screening requirements, this would represent a permanent increase in headcount. The estimated personnel cost for each position is $143,953, for a total impact for new positions of $431,859 in FY27.

Without added staffing, recruitment processes may be delayed by several weeks to several months. These delays would stem from the extensive verification required for applicants with prior federal employment or contractual relationships, particularly when determining involvement in federal immigration enforcement. The duration of the delay is largely dependent on external entities such as DHS or federal contractors whose response times cannot be controlled by the County. All eligible lists must remain on hold until every applicant has been fully screened.

OHR indicates that implementation of the bill will require updates to the department's website, job board, and supplemental application questions. To complete these updates, OHR anticipates the need for overtime for existing staff to close all active job postings and reopen them with the required criteria and revised questions. The estimated cost for this work is approximately 10 hours at $76 per hour, or $760.

Because OHR is currently short staffed in its classification function, contractor support will be required to assist with the initial implementation phase. A short-term contractor will be needed to conduct a position analysis to determine which County positions meet the bill's definition of a "sensitive position." OHR estimates the cost of this short-term engagement at up to $20,000 (600 hours at $33 per hour).

OHR currently maintains Service Level Agreements with departments to issue eligible candidate lists within 10 days of a job posting's closing date. Even with additional staff, OHR anticipates recruitment delays due to the level of external verification required.

Required Effort to Comply with the Bill Provisions
Implementation will also require OHR to:

- Submit an Executive Regulation amending the Montgomery County Personnel Regulations to align with the new requirements.
- Develop and deliver updated guidance and training for HR Liaisons and hiring managers.

Potential Operational Impact on Filling County Vacancies
The legislation will create delays in recruitment and selection processes due to expanded screening and required system updates.

OHR does not anticipate any impact on wage compression or wage equity, as the

	salary-on-hire protocols remain unchanged. OHR expects that additional staff time from HR Specialists and potentially contractual staff or overtime may be needed to support the expanded screening process. Delays in the recruitment process could be wide ranging and will vary by position type. Roles that typically attract few or no applicants with federal or contractor backgrounds may experience no delay, while positions requiring extensive verification of immigration enforcement related experience may face delays of several months.
Staff Impact	Implementation of the bill is expected to require staff support from Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) and OHR. At this time, it is unclear whether this will generate additional personnel or contractual costs beyond what is reported above, or whether departments may experience opportunity costs if staff shift time from existing workload commitments. Additionally, any increase in time-to-hire may produce operational impacts in departments relying on overtime or contractual staffing to cover vacancies. A prolonged recruitment timeline could expand reliance on these temporary coverage options, resulting in higher short-term personnel or contractual expenditures until hiring processes can be completed.
Actuarial Analysis	The bill is not expected to impact retiree pension or group insurance costs.
Information Technology Impact	Fully integrating the new supplemental questions into NEOGOV, the County's applicant tracking system, will require a temporary pause in recruitment and hiring activities to allow system updates to be implemented. This may cause short-term disruptions in hiring workflows and delays in filling vacancies while the technology changes are deployed.
Other Information	
Later actions that may impact revenue or expenditures if future spending is projected	The bill does not authorize future spending.
Ranges of revenue or expenditures that are uncertain or difficult to project	The information presented reflects only the financial impact on OHR and does not account for potential impacts on the Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County Recreation, the Sheriff's Office, or other departments with delegated responsibility for application review. The actual fiscal impact of Expedited Bill 29-26 will depend on the number of applicants who have prior employment with ICE, CBP, or similar federal entities involved in enforcing immigration laws. The full impact will also vary based on the level of complexity in implementing specific provisions of the bill and other factors outside of the County's control. Additionally, future compensation increases could increase the cost of the positions included in the estimate, however, it is difficult to estimate compensation increases at this time. The projection does not include inflationary adjustments for personnel or contractual costs; therefore, actual expenditures in future fiscal years may exceed the amounts shown.
Contributors	Samuel Frushour, Office of Human Resources Jennifer Shovlin, Office of Human Resources Shantee Jackson, Office of Management and Budget

Climate Assessment

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 29-26: PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES – ELIGIBILITY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYMENT ("COMMUNITY TRUST IN COUNTY EMPLOYEES ACT")

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change as it is proposing restrictions on the hiring of federal immigration officers in certain County positions.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 29-26

The purpose of Bill 29-26 is to prohibit certain applicants who were involved in federal immigration enforcement from working in frontline positions in County government.

If enacted, Bill 29-26 would designate a specific set of County departments as direct service agencies. These agencies would be prohibited from hiring restricted applicants in sensitive positions.[1] Figure A in the Appendix lists the direct service agencies designated in Bill 29-26.

The Bill would define a *restricted applicant* as an applicant who, on or after October 1, 2025:[2]

- Was employed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP); or
- Participated in immigration enforcement through another federal agency for more than six months.

The Bill would define a *sensitive position* as a County position in a direct services agency that has:[3]

- Regular interaction with the public; or
- Decision-making authority over access to or distribution of public resources.

The Bill would require the Office of Human Resources to include information on this restriction in job postings for applicable positions. It would also allow the County Executive to develop Method (1) regulations to implement the restriction.[4]

The Bill's lead sponsor notes federal immigration enforcement has "eroded community trust in government" and caused a "decrease in immigrant families accessing County resources." They explain the Bill intends to help rebuild community trust in County government by assuring residents the County's frontline workers have not participated in "unconstitutional, discriminatory federal actions."[5]

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 29-26 on June 16, 2026.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

As the Bill is proposing restrictions on the hiring of federal immigration officers in certain County positions, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 will have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions and community climate resilience.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The Climate Assessment Act requires OLO to offer recommendations, such as amendments or other measures to mitigate any anticipated negative climate impacts.[6] OLO does not offer recommendations or amendments as Expedited Bill 29-26 is likely to have no impact on the County's contribution to addressing climate change, including the reduction and/or sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions and community climate resilience.

CAVEATS

OLO notes two caveats to this climate assessment. First, predicting the impacts of legislation upon climate change is a challenging analytical endeavor due to data limitations, uncertainty, and the broad, global nature of climate change. Second, the analysis performed here is intended to inform the legislative process, not determine whether the Council should enact legislation. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

PURPOSE OF CLIMATE ASSESSMENTS

The purpose of the Climate Assessments is to evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on the County's contribution to addressing climate change. These climate assessments will provide the Council with a more thorough understanding of the potential climate impacts and implications of proposed legislation, at the County level. The scope of the Climate Assessments is limited to the County's contribution to addressing climate change, specifically upon the County's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and how actions suggested by legislation could help increase the County's community climate resilience.

While co-benefits such as health and cost savings may be discussed, the focus is on how proposed County bills may impact GHG emissions and community resilience.

CONTRIBUTIONS

OLO staffer Kaitlyn Simmons drafted this assessment.

Appendix

Figure A. Designated Direct Service Agencies in Expedited Bill 29-26[7]

- Office of Community Partnerships
- Community Use of Public Facilities
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Department of Permitting Services
- Department of Transportation
- Regional Services Centers
- Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
- Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Services
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Montgomery County Public Libraries
- Montgomery County Recreation
- Office of Consumer Protection
- Office of Grants Management
- Office of Human Resources
- Office of Human Rights

[1] Expedited Bill 29-26, Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 29-26, Montgomery County Council, Introduced June 16, 2026, pgs. (2)-(4).
[2] Ibid, pg. (3).
[3] Ibid, pgs. (3)-(4).
[4] Ibid, pg. (4).
[5] "Councilmembers Mink and Jawando Introduce Bill to Prohibit Hiring Recent ICE and CBP Employees into any County Positions That Directly Serve the Public," News Release, Montgomery County Council, June 18, 2026.
[6] Bill 3-22, Legislative Branch – Climate Assessments – Required, Montgomery County Council, Effective date October 24, 2022
[7] Expedited Bill 29-26, Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 29-26, pgs. (2)-(3).

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) Impact Statement

Office of Legislative Oversight

EXPEDITED BILL 29-26: PERSONNEL AND HUMAN RESOURCES - ELIGIBILITY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYMENT ("COMMUNITY TRUST IN COUNTY EMPLOYEES ACT")

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 could have a positive impact on racial equity and social justice (RESJ) in the County. Banning job applicants who have participated in recent immigration enforcement from frontline County positions could help improve perceptions among immigrant community members that address their growing distrust and disengagement in local government. OLO also recognizes Bill 29-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

PURPOSE OF RESJ IMPACT STATEMENTS

RESJ impact statements (RESJIS) evaluate the anticipated impact of legislation on racial equity and social justice in the County. RESJ is a **process** that focuses on centering the needs, leadership, and power of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) and communities with low incomes. RESJ is also a **goal** of eliminating racial and social inequities. Applying a RESJ lens is essential to achieve RESJ.[1] This involves seeing, thinking, and working differently to address the racial and social inequities that cause racial and social disparities.[2]

PURPOSE OF EXPEDITED BILL 29-26

The purpose of Bill 29-26 is to prohibit certain applicants who were involved in federal immigration enforcement from working in frontline positions in County government.

If enacted, Bill 29-26 would designate a specific set of County departments as direct service agencies. These agencies would be prohibited from hiring restricted applicants in sensitive positions.[3] Figure A in the Appendix lists the direct service agencies designated in Bill 29-26.

The Bill would define a *restricted applicant* as an applicant who, on or after October 1, 2025:[4]

- Was employed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP); or
- Participated in immigration enforcement through another federal agency for more than six months.

The Bill would define a *sensitive position* as a County position in a direct services agency that has:[5]

- Regular interaction with the public, or
- Decision-making authority over access to or distribution of public resources.

The Bill would require the Office of Human Resources to include information on this restriction in job postings for applicable positions. It would also allow the County Executive to develop Method (1) regulations to implement the Bill.[6]

The Bill's lead sponsor notes federal immigration enforcement has "eroded community trust in government" and caused a "decrease in immigrant families accessing County resources." They explain the Bill intends to help rebuild community trust in County government by assuring residents the County's frontline workers have not participated in "unconstitutional, discriminatory federal actions."[7]

The Council introduced Expedited Bill 29-26 on June 16, 2026.

This RESJIS builds on the ones for:

- Expedited Bill 26-24, Police - U visa Law Enforcement Certification Policy, published in December 2024, which provides racial equity context on undocumented community members;[8] and
- Bill 3-26, Administration - Immigration Enforcement Guidance - Required (The County Values Act), published in March 2026, which provides racial equity context on U.S immigration policy and enforcement.[9]

ANTICIPATED RESJ IMPACTS

As noted in the RESJIS for Bill 3-26, racial inequity is a defining feature of the U.S.'s approach to immigration policy and enforcement. ICE and CBP in particular have a legacy of targeting BIPOC in aggressive, discriminatory, and frequently violent, immigration enforcement.[10] Since 2025, immigration enforcement has been vastly expanded with the Trump administration's mass deportation agenda, massive increases in funding to ICE and CBP,[11] and a Supreme Court decision allowing racial profiling by immigration enforcement agents.[12] As a result, aggressive, racially targeted immigration enforcement has become a regular presence in communities across the U.S., including in the DC region.[13]

To consider the anticipated impact of Expedited Bill 29-26 on RESJ in the County, OLO recommends the consideration of two related questions:

- Who would primarily benefit or be burdened by this bill?
- What racial and social inequities could passage of this bill weaken or strengthen?

Community members who are immigrants, especially those who are undocumented, could benefit from having increased assurance County employees they may interact with have not been involved in immigration enforcement since October 2025.

As shown in Table A (Appendix), Asian and Latinx community members are overrepresented among community members born outside the U.S. They are also overrepresented among community members who are not U.S. citizens. Conversely, Black, Native American, and Pacific Islander community members are proportionately represented among community members born outside the U.S. and those who are not U.S. citizens, while White community members are largely underrepresented. Of note, community members who are not U.S. citizens include community members who have legal status in the U.S. and undocumented community members who do not have legal status. Estimates from the Migration Policy Institute suggest undocumented community members in the County are disproportionately Latinx.[14,15]

Immigration enforcement agents from ICE, CBP, and other federal agencies are frequently carrying out enforcement operations in public spaces that indiscriminately target BIPOC community members, especially those who are Black and Latinx.[16] A study of over one thousand recent enforcement actions by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) found agents have routinely adopted tactics – such as racial profiling and uses of force – that frequently led to "serious civil rights violations."[17] The actions of immigration enforcement agents have created a heightened state of fear in BIPOC immigrant communities that has decreased their trust and engagement with a range of public services like going to

school or seeking health care.[18] Banning job applicants who have participated in recent immigration enforcement from frontline County positions could help improve perceptions among immigrant community members that address their growing distrust and disengagement in local government.

Taken together, OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 could have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. OLO also recognizes Bill 29-26 as an equitable policy proposal since it centers the needs of community members who are being targeted by immigration enforcement, who are disproportionately Black and Latinx.

RECOMMENDED AMENDMENTS

The County's RESJ Act requires OLO to consider whether to recommend amendments to bills that could reduce racial and social inequities and advance RESJ.[19] OLO anticipates Expedited Bill 29-26 could have a positive impact on RESJ in the County. As such, OLO does not offer recommended amendments.

CAVEATS

Two caveats to this RESJIS should be noted. First, predicting the impact of bills on RESJ is challenging due to data limitations, uncertainty, and other factors. Second, this RESJIS is intended to inform the Council's decision-making process rather than determine it. Thus, any conclusion made in this statement does not represent OLO's endorsement of, or objection to, the bill under consideration.

APPENDIX

Figure A. Designated Direct Service Agencies in Expedited Bill 29-26

- Office of Community Partnerships
- Community Use of Public Facilities
- Department of Environmental Protection
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Department of Permitting Services
- Department of Transportation
- Regional Services Centers
- Department of Correction and Rehabilitation
- Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
- Montgomery County Police Department
- Montgomery County Public Libraries
- Montgomery County Recreation
- Office of Consumer Protection
- Office of Grants Management
- Office of Human Resources
- Office of Human Rights

Source: Expedited Bill 29-26, Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 29-26, pgs. (2)-(3).

Table A. Community Members Born Outside of the U.S by Race and Ethnicity, Montgomery County[20]

Race or ethnicity	% Born Outside of U.S.	% Born Outside of U.S. and not a U.S. Citizen	% County Population
Asian	31.6	25.7	15.4
Black	19.5	16.4	18.6
Native American	0.8	0.8	0.6
Pacific Islander	0.0	0.0	0.0
White	16.8	14.0	42.1
Latinx	32.2	44.1	21.0

Source: Table S0501, 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Census Bureau.

[1] Definition of racial equity and social justice adopted from M. Gamblin et al., "Applying Racial Equity to U.S. Federal Nutrition Programs," Bread for the World and Racial Equity Tools.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Expedited Bill 29-26, Introduction Staff Report for Expedited Bill 29-26, Montgomery County Council, Introduced June 16, 2026, pgs. (2)-(4).
[4] Ibid, pg. (3).
[5] Ibid, pgs. (3)-(4).
[6] Ibid, pg. (4).
[7] "Councilmembers Mink and Jawando Introduce Bill to Prohibit Hiring Recent ICE and CBP Employees into any County Positions That Directly Serve the Public," News Release, Montgomery County Council, June 18, 2026.
[8] RESJIS for Bill 26-24, Office of Legislative Oversight, December 17, 2024.
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[10] B. Hing, "Institutional Racism, ICE Raids, and Immigration Reform," University of San Francisco Law Review, December 29, 2009; "The Legacy of Racism within the U.S. Border Patrol," American Immigration Council, February 10, 2021; A. Mahoney, "Black Undocumented Migrants Face Far Higher Deportation Rates," Capital B, June 18, 2025.
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[14] RESJIS for Expedited Bill 26-24, pg. 2.
[15] Profile of the Unauthorized Population: Montgomery County, MD, Migration Policy Institute.
[16] M. Hellmann, "'It's like they're hunting': US citizens and legal residents report increase in racial profiling by ICE," The Guardian, January 22, 2026; J. Ong, et al., "Latino ICE Arrests, Detentions, and Removals Updates," UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge, May 2026; "Immigration Detention Expansion in Trump's Second Term," American Immigration Council, January 2026, pgs. 12-17; S. Starr, "In Ohio, Haitians' American dream shatters as ICE prepares to deport them," The Guardian, August 12, 2026.
[17] N. Shah, "We Documented 1,200+ Actions by ICE. Here's What We Found." ACLU, July 16, 2026.
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[19] Bill 27-19, Administration – Human Rights – Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice – Racial Equity and Social Justice Advisory Committee – Established, Montgomery County Council.
[20] For Table A, race is inclusive of Latinx origin.

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor
Rockville MD 20850

RE: Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - **IN FAVOR**

Dear Montgomery County Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Tara Yadav. I am a Montgomery County resident, a student at Springbrook High School, the founder of Still She Grows, a youth-led nonprofit that works with underserved women throughout our community, and a member of Young Activists of the World. I am writing in strong support of Expedited Bill 29-26.

Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation. Nearly one in three residents is an immigrant, and four in seven children have at least one immigrant parent. For many families, trust in county government is not optional but it is what allows them to report crimes, enroll their children in school, seek healthcare and access county services without fear.

This bill recognizes that trust is essential to effective government. Restricting former Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) employees from certain public-facing county positions is not about punishing individuals. It is about recognizing the lasting impact that immigration enforcement has had on many members of our community and ensuring that county institutions remain places where every resident feels safe seeking help.

There are several reasons why this legislation deserves support:

- **Community trust:** Bill 29-26 is built on the principle that county agencies cannot effectively serve residents without public trust. When families fear the people providing government services, they are less likely to use those services or ask for help.
- **Public safety:** Research has found that increased cooperation with immigration enforcement is associated with lower crime reporting among Hispanic communities because victims and witnesses become less willing to contact law enforcement (National Bureau of Economic Research). A Princeton University study similarly found that after federal immigration enforcement priorities were narrowed, crime reports from Hispanic residents increased by approximately 10 percent, demonstrating how immigration enforcement policies can influence community cooperation.
- **Impact on county agencies:** Departments such as Montgomery County Public Schools, the Montgomery County Police Department, Health and Human Services, libraries and recreation all rely on positive relationships with the public. If residents associate these institutions with immigration enforcement, they may avoid reporting crimes, seeking medical assistance or participating in programs designed to serve them.

- **Concerns surrounding ICE hiring practices**: Recent reporting by Reuters, the Associated Press and the Los Angeles Times found that ICE's rapid hiring expansion raised concerns regarding background checks, vetting procedures and misconduct screening. At a time when the federal government is accelerating hiring despite these concerns, Montgomery County has an opportunity to prioritize public confidence in its own workforce.

As someone who works with underserved communities, I have learned that meaningful public service begins with trust. When people are afraid of the institutions meant to support them, everyone is less safe. Families hesitate to seek help. Victims become less likely to report crimes. Communities become more isolated from the very resources designed to protect them.

Expedited Bill 29-26 affirms Montgomery County's commitment to safety, equity and public trust. It recognizes that the government works best when every resident feels comfortable interacting with the people who serve them. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to vote in favor of Expedited Bill 29-26. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Tara Yadav | Statewide Advocate of Young Activists Of The World | July 13, 2026

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There are several reasons why this legislation deserves support:

- Community trust. Bill 29-26 is built on the principle that county agencies cannot effectively serve residents without public trust. When families fear the people providing government services, they are less likely to use those services or ask for help.
- Public safety. Research has found that increased cooperation with immigration enforcement is associated with lower crime reporting among Hispanic communities because victims and witnesses become less willing to contact law enforcement (National Bureau of Economic Research). A Princeton University study similarly found that after federal immigration enforcement priorities were narrowed, crime reports from Hispanic residents increased by approximately 10 percent, demonstrating how immigration enforcement policies can influence community cooperation.
- Impact on county agencies. Departments such as Montgomery County Public Schools, the Montgomery County Police Department, Health and Human Services, libraries and recreation all rely on positive relationships with the public. If residents associate these institutions with immigration enforcement, they may avoid reporting crimes, seeking medical assistance or participating in programs designed to serve them.
- Concerns surrounding ICE hiring practices. Recent reporting by Reuters, the Associated Press and the *Los Angeles Times* found that ICE's rapid hiring expansion raised concerns regarding background checks, vetting procedures and misconduct screening. At a time when the federal government is accelerating hiring despite these concerns, Montgomery County has an opportunity to prioritize public confidence in its own workforce.

As someone who works with underserved communities, I have learned that meaningful public service begins with trust. When people are afraid of the institutions meant to support them, everyone is less safe. Families hesitate to seek help. Victims become less likely to report crimes. Communities become more isolated from the very resources designed to protect them.

Expedited Bill 29-26 affirms Montgomery County's commitment to safety, equity and public trust. It recognizes that the government works best when every resident feels comfortable interacting with the people who serve them.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Council to vote in favor of Expedited Bill 29-26. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor
Rockville MD 20850

RE: Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - **IN FAVOR**

Dear Montgomery County Council:

My name is Aubade Garcia. I reside in Silver Spring and am a Statewide and Countywide advocate for the Maryland Chapter of the Young Activists Of The World, which is a student-led group that encourages advocacy from the youth and civic participation. Thank you for the chance to submit a written testimony on Expedited Bill 29-26. I come forth sharing my testimony in favor of Expedited Bill 29-26, otherwise known as the Community Trust in County Employees Act.

My friend and peer has encountered and has seen how aggressive and violent agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) can be. She has been open about her experience and has permitted me to share it. Her father was deported, and the manner in which he was taken was aggressive. She and the rest of her family had to see her father ripped away from her family. It was a circumstance where no aggression was needed, especially not in front of a family with young children. Understandably, it took a toll on her. She didn't go to school for a few days, and when she came back, she was quiet and frightened by loud noises. She was unlike her usual self and highly alert. In her words, that experience shook her to her core, and she is not alone in this. Many families have experienced this.

Her experience goes to show that hiring people who previously worked for ICE or CBP only drives families to live in fear. It fosters a belief that no one, such as teachers, doctors, and other positions that should be seen as trustworthy, is trustworthy. For example, students will no longer feel safe or trusting of their teachers, who should be trusted adults.

To further prove my point why this bill should be passed, look at the statistics and research:
1. **Public safety:** According to a Congressional Investigation back in December of 2025, there have been countless accounts of ICE and CBP agents detaining U.S. citizens, treating children with negligence for their safety and well-being, using excessive force on detainees and bystanders, and much more (United States, Congress, Senate, Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations 3)
2. **Community trust:** An Alliance for Immigrant Survivors (AIS) survey reveals that 75.6% of advocates and attorneys report that the immigrant survivors they work with and have worked with are afraid to seek help from the courts and report domestic violence and sexual assault to the police due to fear of being picked up by ICE (Alliance for Immigrant Survivors).

Our community is in a time of need. They're scared and feel isolated when they shouldn't. Respectfully, I ask the Council to do right by our community and vote in support of Expedited Bill 29-26. The passage of this bill will not only protect our community but also encourage other counties to adopt a bill like Expedited Bill 29-26, spreading safety and trust across this country.

Sincerely, Aubade Garcia | Statewide Advocate of Young Activists Of The World MD | July 13, 2026

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Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor
Rockville MD 20850

RE:Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - **IN FAVOR**

Dear Montgomery County Council,

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on this bill. I testify in favor of implementing Expedited Bill 29-26

My name is Lidya Leykun. I am a long time resident of Silver Spring and County-wide advocate/lobbyist of the Maryland chapter of Young Activists of The World, a group devoted to advocacy and civic engagement. As a first generation American from an Ethiopian family, I've seen how much fear Immigration and Customs Enforcements(ICE)/ Customs and Border Enforcement(CBP) has brought to my majority immigrant community.

After hearing my own friend's experience with ICE, I've seen how much fear they have instilled into my friend's life and even my community's. I now know that ICE and CBP have no place in Montgomery County because of the constant fear and distrust they bring to my own community.

It is imperative that the Montgomery County Council enacts Expedited Bill 29-26 to further prove to Montgomery County Residents that our community is safe for immigrant families. Denying ICE and CBP the ability to infiltrate their roles as public servants of this county and restrict the employment of former immigration officers.

Sincerely, Lidya Leykun| County-Wide Advocate and Lobbyist| July,13, 2026

Lidya Leykun, Trust in County Employees Act (Montgomery County Council,2026), 1

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor
Rockville MD 20850

RE: Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - **IN FAVOR**

Dear Montgomery County Council,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on this bill. I present this testimony in favor of implementing Expedited Bill 29-26.

My name is Lidya Leykun. I am a long-time resident of Silver Spring and County-wide advocate/lobbyist of the Maryland chapter of Young Activists of The World, a group devoted to youth advocacy and civic engagement. As a first generation American from an Ethiopian family, I've seen how much fear Immigration and Customs Enforcements (ICE)/ Customs and Border Enforcement (CBP) has brought to my majority immigrant community.

After hearing my own friend's experience with ICE, I've seen how much fear they have instilled into my friend's life and even my community's. I now know that ICE and CBP have no place in Montgomery County because of the constant fear and distrust they bring to my own community.

It is imperative that the Montgomery County Council enacts Expedited Bill 29-26 to further prove to Montgomery County Residents that our community is safe for immigrant families. Denying ICE and CBP the ability to infiltrate their roles as public servants of this county and restrict the employment of former immigration officers will rebuild community trust.

Sincerely, Lidya Leykun | Statewide Advocate of Young Activists Of The World MD | July 13, 2026

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor
Rockville MD 20850

RE: Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - **IN FAVOR**

Dear Montgomery County Council:

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify on this matter. I offer testimony strongly in favor of enacting Expedited Bill 29-26.

My name is Remy Lee. I am a resident of the Silver Spring community and State Lead of the Maryland Chapter of the Young Activists Of The World, an emerging group focused on youth advocacy and civic participation. As an Asian individual and a student of Montgomery County Public Schools, I've seen firsthand how Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Customs and Border Protection (CBP) worries my family and causes systemic distrust in the very government meant to protect us.

The deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti and many others in immigration detention show ICE and CBP's capacity for inhumane violence within localized areas, and letting former ICE or CBP employees take jobs within our county–especially in public areas like education, transport, health, or law enforcement–would terrorize our families in a community that promises safety.

There are a wide range of reasons as to why this bill should be passed, including: 1. **General trust:** A PBS News/NPR/Marist poll found that roughly six in ten (~60%) Americans strongly disapprove of immigration enforcement (Loffman).

2. **Community impact:** A Baltimore Banner poll points to the fact that ~25% (one in four) of Montgomery County residents know someone that has been impacted by the immigration operations of the current administration. The sheer terror within our very own community has even made some residents carry their passports everywhere (Planas).
3. **Crime reporting:** Research from Northwestern University concludes immigrant communities face apprehensions in interactions with law enforcement due to the fear of immigration enforcement (Gonçalves et al.).

We cannot afford to compromise our residents' senses of safety in our county. We cannot afford to have our community fear its access to the justice system. And we especially cannot let the discriminatory practices of ICE and CBP employees infiltrate their roles as public servants of this county. So, for these reasons, I strongly urge the Council to vote in favor of Expedited Bill 29-26 and restrict the employment of former immigration officers. Your leadership on this matter can reflect our community's shared values of safety and equity, and it can reinstate the trust our county deserves to have.

Sincerely, Remy Lee | Co-Chair & Maryland State Lead of Young Activists Of The World | July 13, 2026



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Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th floor
Rockville MD 20850

RE: Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - IN FAVOR

Dear Council President Fani González and Members of the Montgomery County Council,

We Are CASA respectfully submits this testimony in support of Expedited Bill 29-26, the Community Trust in County Employees Act.

We Are CASA is proud to represent tens of thousands of immigrant members in Montgomery County. For decades, we have partnered with the County to build a community where immigrants are welcome, and we have proudly supported Montgomery County's longstanding leadership in advancing policies that protect immigrant families. We believe Expedited Bill 29-26 is a necessary continuation of that commitment.

For many immigrant families in Montgomery County, an interaction with an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent represents the worst day of their lives: the knock on the door before dawn, the parent who never came home from work, the loved one who disappeared into a detention center with no certainty of when or whether they will come home. These experiences leave deep and lasting trauma that ripples through entire families and communities.

Expedited Bill 29-26 recognizes that County government can only serve residents if they trust it. For immigrant families who have lived through ICE raids, arrests, and family separation, that trust is deeply fragile. This bill helps protect that trust by ensuring that former ICE agents who participated in the federal government's inhumane immigration enforcement system are not hired into sensitive, public facing County positions.

County employees are entrusted with serving residents with dignity, fairness, and compassion. Families seeking healthcare, housing assistance, library services, or other essential County resources should never have to question whether the person sitting across from them participated in the inhumane immigration enforcement system that shattered their family or terrorized their community under this current federal administration. County government must remain a place of safety and trust, not one that reopens trauma or blurs the line between local public service and federal immigration enforcement.

At a time when our immigrant communities are living in heightened fear and uncertainty, Expedited Bill 29-26 is more important than ever. Across Maryland, immigration enforcement

has escalated dramatically. Families in Montgomery County are experiencing a level of immigration enforcement unlike anything we have seen in recent history.

At We Are CASA, we witness these impacts every single day through our organizing, legal services, housing programs, workforce development, and health services.

We meet mothers trying to figure out how they will pay rent after their partner has been detained. We counsel teenagers suddenly responsible for caring for younger siblings while trying to stay in school themselves. Our attorneys work with families facing eviction because they have lost their primary wage earner overnight. Our healthcare teams care for children struggling with anxiety, depression, and declining performance in school after watching a parent disappear into ICE custody.

ICE does not simply take one person. It destabilizes entire families, neighborhoods, workplaces, and communities. It removes parents from dinner tables, workers from essential jobs, caregivers from homes, and trusted neighbors from the communities they helped build. What remains is fear, instability, and uncertainty.

These experiences fundamentally shape how immigrant families interact with local government. Trust, once broken, is difficult to rebuild. Families who fear local government are less likely to seek medical care, report crimes, enroll their children in programs, access housing assistance, or turn to county agencies in times of need. This harms not only immigrant communities but the health, safety, and well-being of Montgomery County as a whole.

Expedited Bill 29-26 recognizes this reality and reinforces the clear separation between Montgomery County government and the federal agencies responsible for inflicting harm on our communities.

For these reasons, We Are CASA respectfully urges the Council to issue a favorable report and pass Expedited Bill 29-26, the Community Trust in County Employees Act.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF EXPEDITED BILL 29–26

Personnel and Human Resources – Eligibility for County Employment

("Community Trust in County Employees Act")

July 14, 2026

Manna Food Center strongly supports Expedited Bill 29–26, the Community Trust in County Employees Act, sponsored by Councilmember Mink and cosponsored by Councilmember Jawando. We appreciate the Council's continued leadership in advancing policies that help ensure all Montgomery County residents can safely access essential county services and resources.

Montgomery County has long been recognized as a welcoming and inclusive community. Passage of this bill would help reinforce that commitment by ensuring that eligible residents can seek county services, benefits, and basic needs assistance without fear or uncertainty. When families feel safe accessing resources, they are better able to maintain food security, health, and stability.

Since 1983, Manna Food Center has served Montgomery County residents, and today our work touches many aspects of civic and community life. From MCPS schools to neighborhood grocery stores and local farms, from produce pop–ups to our choice markets and distribution centers, we engage with residents every day across all parts of the county. Manna also operates programs specifically designed to meet the needs of our diverse immigrant communities. For example, our grocery voucher program, which focuses on expanded access to culturally relevant food, saw 9,384 vouchers redeemed in FY26, generating more than $610,884 in economic activity for local businesses specializing in culturally familiar foods. During this same year, Manna helped neighbors submit 271 SNAP applications and redeterminations while organizing 84 SNAP outreach events alongside community–based partners.

Through this work, we have heard directly from families who are experiencing increased anxiety and uncertainty about accessing public programs and community services. Changes to federal benefit programs, evolving immigration policies, questions surrounding eligibility, and broader uncertainty have contributed to hesitation among many residents who would otherwise seek assistance. Regardless of the source of these concerns, the result is the same: families delay or avoid accessing resources that are intended to help them meet basic needs.

manna food center
fighting hunger and feeding hope in montgomery county

At the same time, the Montgomery County Food Council reported this July that of approximately 70,000 SNAP participants in Montgomery County, 7% have lost their benefits, leaving thousands of children, older adults, and working families with fewer resources to purchase groceries. Manna is now serving more than 11,000 families each month as demand has continued to rise following the federal government shutdown and significant federal workforce reductions affecting our region. Comparing February 2025 and February 2026, we documented a 20% increase in the number of families seeking assistance.

Community organizations like Manna and our partners continue to adapt to meet these growing needs. We have expanded food delivery options, organized additional neighborhood pop–up markets, and worked closely with community partners to ensure that individuals who lost SNAP eligibility or who are hesitant to travel to distribution sites can still access nutritious food. While these efforts have helped, charitable organizations cannot fully replace the public safety net or eliminate the barriers that discourage families from seeking assistance.

For these reasons, we believe it is important that residents have confidence in their interactions with county government. Clear policies that reinforce trust between county employees and the communities they serve strengthen the effectiveness of our local network of food assistance, health, and human services. They also support the collaboration between nonprofit organizations and county agencies that is essential to helping residents navigate changing benefit programs and connect with available resources.

We believe the Community Trust in County Employees Act represents an important step in reinforcing Montgomery County's longstanding commitment to serving all residents with fairness, dignity, and respect. It complements previous local and state efforts, including the County Values Act, the Unmask ICE Act, and the Data Privacy Act (HB 711), to strengthen public trust and ensure that residents can confidently access the services available to them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Manna Food Center



Craig L. Rice, CEO
240.268.2524



craig@mannafood.org

Public Comment Opposing Bill 29-26, Community Trust in County Employees Act

Good afternoon Council President Fani-González, Councilmembers and Community members.

My name is Esther Wells, and I am here in **strong opposition to Bill 29-26, the Community Trust in County Employees Act.**

As an immigrant, I understand that true community trust comes from safe neighborhoods and fully staffed public safety departments.

I would note that the only immigrant on this Council, Council President Fani-González, herself, a former undocumented immigrant, is not a co-sponsor of this bill. That should tell us this debate is not about being pro-immigrant or anti-immigrant. It is about whether this legislation is good policy for Montgomery County.

Last month, I testified in strong opposition to Bill 18-26 because it creates an unwarranted and extensive screening process for former federal law enforcement officers. Today, I testify in strong opposition to Bill 29-26 because it effectively prohibits hiring many of those same applicants altogether.

If someone is unfit for employment, why create a screening process? And if a screening process can identify qualified candidates, why impose a blanket ban?

These two Bills are inconsistent, incoherent and suggest that this Council has not thought through the practical consequences of its own policies.

I am also troubled by the lack of transparency and availability of the Fiscal & Economic Impact Statements, Climate Assessment, Racial Equity and Social Justice Impact Statements for this Bill. **Residents are being asked to comment on a bill without being given the necessary information to fully understand what the costs, risks, and consequences will be to implement, administer and defend these new hiring restrictions.**

Financially, Montgomery County is in an affordability crisis! Taxpayers are saying it's too expensive to live here!

And here's why; Last month, this Council approved our current year FY2027 Operating Budget of $7.9 billion dollars. Collectively, this Council voted to eliminate our $692 Homeowners Tax Credit, raided our County reserves down to bare minimum, broke their promise of a one-time $25M raid on our OPEB retirement trust by turning it into a two-time habit, voted to forgo $16M of matching State grant funds desperately needed to fix our schools' HVAC and mold problems, and created a structural deficit of over $290M, which will require another tax hike of 11% next year.

When discussions occur with CASA, labor unions, or any other stakeholders, those conversations should be conducted publicly and on the record.

We cannot govern from fear. Fear always demands one more restriction, one more exclusion, and one more group to blame. Where does it end? What needs to be in place before these demands are finally satisfied!?

In summary, I urge you to release the missing impact statements, hold all stakeholder discussions in public view, protect our merit-based civil service system, stop playing politics with public safety, and vote NO on Bill 29-26.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 4th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: Expedited Bill 29-26 / Personnel and Human Resources - Eligibility for County Employment (Community Trust in County Employees Act) - **IN FAVOR**

Dear Montgomery County Council:

I am grateful for the opportunity to present testimony in favor of this immensely necessary measure to protect our communities.

My name is Blen Asegu, and I am a resident of Olney born to two Ethiopian immigrants. I attend Richard Montgomery High School and am part of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program there. I am a student advocate, and a State Liaison for Young Activists of the World. I have testified previously regarding Montgomery County community and school safety as it relates to interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in front of the Council. Expedited Bill 29-26 continues to further a growing nationwide mission to protect our families and friends from the dangerous and unjust behaviors of "government" agencies that have failed to fulfill that duty, such as ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

Everyday, members of the ever-so-diverse Montgomery County, interact with public sector employees: nurses, librarians, police officers, and so many more important roles. For all these parts in a society to function properly, trust must be present. This bill guards that trust. In restricting individuals who previously worked (as of October 1, 2025) for ICE, CBP, or other immigration enforcement roles for employment in public county positions, the civilians for whom this bill is meant to serve will retain that trust. Trust that our elected representatives, such as the County Council, are always willing to shield them from the discrimination that could and has occurred.

I have heard countless heartbreaking stories about the damage ICE and CBP agents have done to families. Even with the Council Hearing room, where I watched other high school students break down as they told their personal experiences. Now imagine how those kids would feel if they learned that their newly hired bus driver, for instance, was a former ICE agent? They would not feel safe, nor would they feel empowered. It would be a blatant show of complicity, and would silence them as fear grows. That trust would never be recovered and our integral immigrant communities would lose faith in our societal frameworks, such as healthcare and the justice system.

According to a study done by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on the impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on immigrant communities, "perceptions about the relationship between those in positions of local authority and national immigration policy can undermine trust in community institutions," (Hacker, Karen et al, 2011). It is this very fear that this bill will subvert. When one is unable to trust their home and neighbors, crime is under reported and public safety is weakened. If the institutions that are meant to support the marginalized allow in those who

discourage acceptance because of borders, then trust is undoubtedly broken and community safety is jeopardized and it will weigh on the hearts and consciences of all whom it silences.

If we are to protect the integrity of our institutions and the safety of residents, then the employment of ICE, CBP, or any other immigration enforcement agent for a public county role must be carefully considered. The Community Trust in County Employees Act acknowledges that hiring former agents, as aforementioned, shatters the perceived trust in county leaders and poses a safety and well-being risk to those in fear of these discriminatory agencies and their histories. Crime is under reported in fear that the justice system is complicit, illnesses ignored for fear that the nurses hired by the Department of Health and Human Services will mistreat you, and streets silent, for even the local crossing guard doesn't put you at ease. This is a fear that is difficult to uproot and damages the health of all, not just a minority. To prevent this from becoming the reality for so many Montgomery County residents, I urge the Montgomery County Council not to hesitate, but to assure families that you will stand in solidarity and protect as have before, and vote in favor for Expedited Bill 29-26, the Community Trust in County Employees Act. Thank you for this opportunity and proposition.

Sincerely, Blen Asegu | State Liaison of Young Activists Of The World | July 12, 2026

Works Cited

Hacker, Karen et al. “The impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on immigrant health: perceptions of immigrants in Everett, Massachusetts, USA.” *Social science & medicine (1982)* vol. 73,4 (2011): 586-594. doi:10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.06.007