

Dear **Members of the Judiciary Committee,**

This testimony is being submitted in alliance with Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore, a group of individuals working to move white folks as part of a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. I am also writing in collaboration with CASA. I am a resident of **District 46, and the zip code 21224, one of the most reliant zip codes in the country on migrants. Immigrants are the reason for our city's and neighborhood's growth and momentum, and need to be and feel protected. I am testifying in support of SB0828 — Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.**

The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act in Maryland aims to safeguard areas like schools, hospitals, and places of worship from immigration enforcement actions by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In 2011, the Department of Homeland Security issued a memorandum limiting ICE's authority to conduct enforcement actions in and near locations such as schools, doctors' offices, and institutions of worship.¹ In 2021, a Biden Administration policy expanded the list of protected areas to include playgrounds, disaster relief locations, social services sites, and other sensitive locations.² These protections were designed to ensure that immigrants could access essential services without fear of deportation. On January 21, 2025, President Trump eliminated these safeguards and authorized ICE enforcement activity in all previously protected areas. Trump's unilateral action aims to instill fear and anxiety in our communities, effectively blocking individuals' access to life-saving medical support, the exercise of religious freedom, the right to a public education, and the ability to safely participate in everyday life. In addition to reversing well-established ICE enforcement guidelines, Trump's action violates the protections that the Constitution guarantees to all people in the United States, regardless of their immigration status.

Throughout Maryland, the Trump Administration's immigration policies are having immediate, critical, and devastating effects. Individuals and families are being forced to make exceptionally difficult choices between protecting themselves from the potential tragedy of deportation and accessing necessary care and services. In schools, empty desks speak to the fear that families feel when deciding how to keep their children safe. Under the new guidelines, individuals may not feel secure seeking critical medical care, putting their health at risk and impacting the overall health of our communities. **SB0828** would strengthen Maryland's commitment to protecting the institutions, service sites, and sacred spaces that keep our communities safe, healthy, and thriving. This bill would push back against policies that are designed to divide us, fracture our sense of community, and sow fear and distrust.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of SB0828 — Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.**

1

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Enforcement Actions at or Focused on Sensitive Locations*, (Washington, D.C.: DHS, 2011), <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>.

2

U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or Near Protected Areas*, (Washington, D.C.: DHS, 2021), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_1027_opa_guidelines-enforcement-actions-in-near-protected-areas.pdf

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,

John Preston Ford

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