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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Dear Honorable Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write this testimony to urge the committee to pass a strong version of **SB 828- Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**.

I live just across the street from the Rollings Terrace Elementary School. Every morning, I wake up to see hundreds of kids walking into school with their parents and making their way home every evening, sometimes stopping to buy ice cream or playing with friends in a nearby playground. I live in an area that is majority Latine and Spanish-speaking. Watching these children smile and laugh brightens my day. Now, I live in constant worry for these kids, knowing their school is no longer a safe place for many of them to learn. I do not want to wake up one day to see ICE officers shattering the warmth of this community by taking away a child and/or their parent or guardian away for the crime of attending school.

For over a decade, federal policy limited Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities in sensitive locations—such as hospitals, schools, courthouses, and places of worship—to prevent intimidation and ensure access to essential services. However, as of January 20, 2025, the revocation of these protections has left immigrant communities vulnerable to enforcement actions in spaces where they should feel safe.

This shift has already created an environment of fear and uncertainty, particularly as the Trump Administration targets visa and green card holders and revokes other previously “legal” immigrants. **Our communities are stronger when everyone in it feels safe to seek medical care, pursue education, access legal resources, or engaging with law enforcement. As a result, our communities, public health, and overall safety are at risk.**

I cannot help but imagine the trauma these young would suffer from witnessing an ICE agent barging into their classroom to interrogate or incarcerate a child. To witness that at such a young age, how would they ever again feel their school is a nurturing place to learn? I also know that some parents or guardians have stopped escorting their children to and from school and after-school activities out of fear that ICE may be stalking the premises. This lack of protection places children in greater physical danger and reduces their access to educational opportunities, exacerbating existing inequities.

Everyone should access essential services without fear of detention or separation. Public safety improves when immigrants feel safe reporting crimes and seeking help. Clear enforcement boundaries build trust, strengthening communities and institutions. For these reasons, **I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828.**

Respectfully,

Joseph Gelula