



**Committee:** Judiciary

**Testimony on:** **SB828** An Emergency Bill: Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

**Position:** Favorable

**Hearing Date:** March 26, 2025

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility is an organization of over 900 supporters, that was founded by physicians and which strongly supports of **SB828** a bill that will protect immigrants' right to seek healthcare free of fear of deportation.

For the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, the Attorney General will enforce the right of all living in Maryland to be free from the fear that they will be rounded up for their immigration status while they are engaged in activities that are essential to their welfare and to public health including but not limited to : seeking medical care, mental health care, emergency relief care, education at any level, anywhere that children have gathered to play such as playgrounds, or while availing themselves of social services. In addition, there is nothing more fundamental to our freedoms as people living in the United States, than religious gatherings being protected. This emergency bill will allow the Attorney General to develop guidelines that are protective, allowing our immigrant neighbors to be able to attend to their lives free of fear of being separated from their families.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supporters who are health care providers know that we cannot take care of our patients if they are afraid to come into our offices or hospital or clinics, if they are afraid to pick up their medicines at the pharmacy, if they are afraid to get important tests and procedures. Delay in care can lead a disease to be more advanced and more difficult to treat. Delay can have an impact on a wide community if it involves infections. It can cause mental as well as physical harm and children are especially vulnerable.<sup>1</sup>

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility understands that prevention is the best treatment. A recent report by the Kaiser Family Foundation<sup>2</sup> reported how the fear of being apprehended, including fear of family separations, resulted in fewer immigrant families seeking

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.healthbeat.org/newyork/2025/01/29/your-local-epidemiologist-ice-raids-effects-on-health/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/issue-brief/potential-impacts-of-mass-detention-and-deportation-efforts-on-the-health-and-well-being-of-immigrant-families/>

health care and other related services to which they were entitled. This impacted even those with protected legal status and impacted behaviors even after more protective regulations were passed. Allowing our immigrant neighbors to attend to their medical needs and other fundamental activities that keep them healthy of mind as well as of body, will improve the lives of all of us who live in Maryland.

**Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility urges you to pass SB828** and keep Marylanders of all different immigration statuses healthy and safe.

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