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For Doctors for Camp Closure

TESTIMONY ON SB828 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Protecting Sensitive Locations Act

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

FROM: Zackary Berger, MD, PhD

My name is Zackary Berger. I am a resident of District 43A, writing as a representative of Doctors for Camp Closure in strong support of SB828, the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.

Besides my active involvement in Doctors for Camp Closure, I am a proud resident of the diverse neighborhood of Charles Village in Baltimore, which includes a number of immigrants. I am also a primary care physician who sees patients at a community center in Baltimore, many of whom are undocumented immigrants.

As a physician who treats the undocumented I see many patients who are terrified to be caught by the state when they are just trying to live a better life. They stop coming to the doctor, or to get lab tests, or to pick up their medications – even to send their kids to school or attend their house of worship! – lest they be picked up off the street and deported.

As I write this testimony I recall the patients I saw in my work day today, all trying to work hard for their families, but all terrified that a false move could jeopardize their lives. Government should help, not hurt. We don't need immigration police in every corner of our lives. If a person who has been alleged to commit a civil offense, like immigration against the law, is served with a duly executed warrant, it should be in a public space, not in a location like a school, clinic, or church where people want to pursue their most basic needs.

Doctors for Camp Closure is a local and national organization of healthcare professionals who believe in supporting immigrants for the sake of their health, the health of their neighbors, and the health of the entire country.

As our neighbors, immigrants deserve to be treated like anyone should be treated. Private, sensitive locations should be respected. Immigration police action should have humane and common-sense limits. I support the Maryland Data Privacy Act as a representative of Doctors for Camp Closure and hope the Committee will return a favorable report.

Zackary Berger, MD, PhD