

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828

SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
February 28, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Fatima Cortessi, and I am a mother, a resident of Rockville, an immigrant, and a proud member of the National Domestic Workers Alliance. I am here to offer my testimony in strong support of SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

Before having any form of protection around my immigration status in this country, I lived in constant fear. At work, I was threatened to be reported to immigration enforcement if I asked for better working conditions or fair payment for my labor. This fear not only impacted my peace of mind but also prevented me from seeking help or accessing essential services. Now that I have some protection, I can breathe a little easier, but I can't imagine how those who have nothing must feel, living each day under the shadow of this fear.

The possibility of facing immigration enforcement in sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals, courthouses, and places of worship creates an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty in our communities. This fear not only affects people like me who work hard to support their families but also our children, who deserve to attend school without fear and grow up feeling safe in their communities.

This bill is crucial because it will:

- **Protect Access to Essential Services:** No one should have to choose between life-saving medical care and the risk of family separation. Our children deserve to attend school without fear, and everyone must be able to seek justice in our courts without the threat of detention.
- **Enhance Public Safety:** When immigrants feel safe accessing services and reporting crimes, our entire community benefits. Fear of enforcement discourages individuals from cooperating with law enforcement, which negatively impacts public safety.
- **Strengthen Community Trust:** By establishing clear boundaries for immigration enforcement, we foster trust between immigrant communities and the institutions meant to serve them. This trust is essential for maintaining a healthy, vibrant, and cohesive society.

As a mother, an immigrant, and a domestic worker, I respectfully urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828. Protecting these sensitive locations not only benefits immigrant families but also strengthens our entire community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.