

Protecting Sensitive Locations Act HB1006/ SB828

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828/HB 1006

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 Barbara Goyette, and I am pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828/HB 1006 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

I have been a nurse for almost 40 years. I currently work in a medical office seeing patients in an outpatient setting. Medical professionals treat all patients, without asking their immigration status. It is imperative that patients are able access medical care without fear of ICE being allowed access to their physician's office.

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, discouraging individuals from seeking medical care, pursuing education, accessing legal resources, or engaging with law enforcement. As a result, our communities, public health, and overall safety are at risk.

If immigrant communities are afraid that ICE has access to their medical provider's office, they will stop seeking medical care. Parents will not bring their children to the pediatrician to get important vaccinations, will not keep well care appointments which assess the child's development, or access sick child care. Adults will stop getting life saving cancer screening, vaccinations, and treatment for acute and chronic medical issues. This will not only impact the individual's health, but public health as well. Unvaccinated people run the risk of not only becoming infected by serious illnesses, but also infecting others. Everyone has the right to medical care and the right to seek that care without fear of ICE. They have the right to privacy. The right to have private conversations with medical professionals without fear of being overheard by ICE officials. Medical facilities need to be safe and accessible to all patients and their families.

I stand with immigrant communities and support the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act 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. Children deserve to attend school without fear, and individuals 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 in turn hampers public safety efforts.

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.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828/HB 1006.