



Testimony Concerning Senate Bill 828
Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations – Guidelines and Policies
(Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 4, 2025

Position: Support

Maryland Family Network (MFN) strongly supports SB 828, which requires the Attorney General (AG) to develop guidelines – in consultation with stakeholders – to limit immigration enforcement at sensitive locations as allowable under federal and state law. Sensitive locations include schools, medical facilities, child care centers, places of worship, courthouses, social service agencies, and other locations deemed appropriate by the AG.

MFN has worked since 1945 to improve the availability and quality of child care and other vital supports for children and families in Maryland. We have been active in state and federal debates on policies that serve children and families and are strongly committed to ensuring that children and their caregivers have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

All Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, should be able to access child care, education, health care, and social services without fear of discrimination and separation from their families and communities. For over a decade, federal policy has limited Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities in sensitive locations to prevent intimidation and ensure access to basic activities and critical services. Unfortunately, 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. It is imperative for Maryland to adopt policies – like SB 828 – to ensure that no family has to make an impossible choice between their safety and survival.

Maryland Family Network has witnessed ICE enforcement actions in child care settings these past few weeks, actions that have separated families while traumatizing children and caregivers. Schools and child care settings should be safe places for children to learn, play, and grow, but tragically, we've seen the harmful impact of ICE enforcement actions in child care programs in Maryland. Parents have been picked up by ICE while dropping off and picking up their children from care, and witnessing these enforcement actions has traumatized the children of the parent(s) being detained, as well as the child care providers who are responsible for the children. A plethora of research demonstrates that the fear of ICE actions has a dramatically negative impact on the health of immigrant families, exacerbating current health conditions and increasing vulnerability to others, particularly anxiety,



depression, high blood pressure, and migraines.¹ Moreover, witnessing a family member or client being detained in an immigration action also causes long-lasting psychological trauma.²

Immigration enforcement actions have a chilling effect on child care enrollment, as parents often keep their children home instead of in care in fear of contact with ICE. Access to early childhood programs and high-quality child care has far-reaching positive effects, from improved socio-economic outcomes, increased earnings as adults, and higher academic achievement throughout schooling.³ These programs also connect families to other critical resources, such as nutrition, health, and family supports. Children and their families cannot reap the benefits of early childhood education programs if they are too afraid to attend or enroll.⁴ Limiting ICE immigration enforcement at child care centers – and other sensitive locations – helps these critical programs function as intended, allowing all Maryland children access to quality care.

Creating opportunities for all Maryland families to thrive fosters community well-being and strengthens our state’s economy. **Maryland Family Network respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 828.**

Submitted by: Lisa Klingenmaier, Deputy Director of Public Policy

¹ Social Science Medicine. 2012. *The Impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Immigrant Health*. [https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3159749/#:~:text=Fear%20of%20Deportation,-Fear%20of%20deportation&text=Some%20even%20worried%20that%20other%20immigrants%20would%20report%20them%20to%20authorities.&text=While%20one%20might%20assume%20that,%E2%80%9Cstatus%E2%80%9D%20might%20be%20questioned.&text=Many%20participants%20were%20particularly%20worried,up%20and%20taken%20by%20ICE.&text=Overall%2C%20deportation%20fear%20seemed%20to,\(English%2Dspeaking%20participant\)](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3159749/#:~:text=Fear%20of%20Deportation,-Fear%20of%20deportation&text=Some%20even%20worried%20that%20other%20immigrants%20would%20report%20them%20to%20authorities.&text=While%20one%20might%20assume%20that,%E2%80%9Cstatus%E2%80%9D%20might%20be%20questioned.&text=Many%20participants%20were%20particularly%20worried,up%20and%20taken%20by%20ICE.&text=Overall%2C%20deportation%20fear%20seemed%20to,(English%2Dspeaking%20participant))

² North Carolina Justice Center. 2018. *The ACE of ICE: How Current Immigration Enforcement and Deportation Hurts Children*. <https://www.ncjustice.org/publications/the-ace-of-ice-how-current-immigration-enforcement-and-deportation-hurts-children/>

³ Child Care Aware. 2020. *Quality Child Care Pays Off*. https://www.childcareaware.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Quality_ROI-1.pdf

⁴ Center for Law and Social Policy. 2018. *Keeping Immigrant Families Safe in Early Childhood Programs*. <https://www.clasp.org/blog/keeping-immigrant-families-safe-early-childhood-programs/>