

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828

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

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

March 4, 2025

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

Kevin James is pleased to offer **a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828- Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).**

I support the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act because I don't believe anyone should feel deterred from places like hospitals, schools, places of worship, and courthouses. As a former paramedic I know that people already weigh how costly a visit to the emergency room will be when deciding whether or not to seek medical care. Worrying about arrest and deportation on top of medical bills will result in fewer people getting care until their condition becomes so acute that they require more extensive and expensive care than they would have if they'd been treated sooner. Hospitals should be a lifeline not a lasso.

As a former teacher I'm probably biased to the value of education. If ICE is allowed to arrest children on school grounds, the ones detained won't be the only ones affected. We already punish children by sending them to under-resourced schools when they come from low income households. Arresting children at school will teach the ones who remain that punishing their peers is more important than funding their schools.

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.

Everyone should access essential services without fear of detention or separation. Public safety improves when immigrants feel safe reporting crimes and seeking help. Clear enforcement boundaries build trust, strengthening communities and institutions. For these reasons, I **urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828.**