



Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 4, 2025

Senate Bill 828 – *Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations – Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)*

POSITION: SUPPORT

I am writing as Co-Chair of the Maryland AAP’s Immigrant Child Health Committee to express my strong support for the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act. This legislation is essential to ensuring that children – many of whom are US citizens—can access critical medical care and education without fear.

As a primary care pediatrician in Baltimore City, I serve primarily children from immigrant and mixed immigration status families. I have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact the rollback of protections for sensitive locations has had on children’s health. My colleagues and I have countless examples, but I will share just one to highlight the importance of this legislation.

Several months ago, I began caring for a previously healthy young girl “Maria” who suffered severe brain injury after being thrown from the vehicle during a severe car accident. Currently, Maria uses a wheelchair and a feeding tube due to her injuries. With the appropriate therapies and medical care, Maria was making remarkable progress—recently even taking her first steps since the accident. However, last month, Maria’s mother canceled all her appointments, stating she was terrified that immigration enforcement agents might take her away from the clinic. I have not been able to reach them since. The window for Maria’s brain recovery is closing. Without continued therapy and treatment, it is very possible she may never walk again, never eat again by mouth, and never reach her full potential.

Maria is not alone, every day we receive calls from families—many of whom have been our patients for years—telling us they will no longer bring their children to clinic because of immigration enforcement fears. Most of these children are American citizens living in mixed status families. This fear has serious public health implications as well—children are falling behind on routine vaccines, increasing the risks of outbreaks of measles, whooping cough, and other preventable diseases in Maryland.

Please vote yes on the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act. No child should be denied access to essential healthcare out of fear. Please help ensure that all Maryland Children have the opportunity to grow, thrive, and reach their full potential.

For more information call:

Dr. Hayley Sparks