



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

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

March 04, 2025

SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair, and members of the committee thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 828. This bill will develop guidelines relating to immigration enforcement at certain sensitive locations.

The CASH Campaign of Maryland promotes economic advancement for low-to-moderate income individuals and families in Baltimore and across Maryland. CASH accomplishes its mission through operating a portfolio of direct service programs, building organizational and field capacity, and leading policy and advocacy initiatives to strengthen family economic stability. CASH and its partners across the state achieve this by providing free tax preparation services through the IRS program 'VITA', offering free financial education and coaching, and engaging in policy research and advocacy. **Almost 4,000 of CASH's tax preparation clients earn less than \$10,000 annually. More than half earn less than \$20,000.**

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.

Our organization operates Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites at libraries, schools, and community centers, providing low-income families, including many immigrants, with free and reliable tax preparation and financial guidance. Recently, we have seen a decline in participation, as some clients fear visiting these locations due to the risk of encountering immigration enforcement. For many immigrant families, tax preparation is more than just a legal obligation, it is a vital opportunity to access financial resources like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC), which can help lift them out of poverty. If families are too afraid to visit these spaces, they lose access to support systems that help them achieve financial and educational stability.

Everyone should access essential services without fear of detention or separation. Public safety improves when immigrants feel safe reporting crimes and seeking help.

Thus, we encourage you to return a favorable report for SB 828.

Creating Assets, Savings and Hope