

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828
SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines
and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**

Maryland Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

March 04, 2025 (SB 828)

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, (SB 828)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for SB 828, Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act). The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is pleased to see the Maryland State Senate undertake such critical action to protect immigrant children and families during a time where their rights and well being are actively under attack. With the rescission of the former Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Protected Areas Guidance, immigrant families are living with uncertainty and fear that has made them hesitant to seek out medical attention and critical services, drop off their children at school, and carry out everyday activities. Therefore we submit the following testimony in support of HB 1006 and SB 0828 titled, Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

Established in 1969, CLASP is a national, non-partisan, non-profit, anti-poverty organization that advances policy solutions for people with low incomes. Our testimony draws upon the work of CLASP experts in the areas of immigration, anti-poverty, and child development policies. As a national anti-poverty organization, we bring a deep commitment to families living with low incomes and knowledge of the challenges that they experience, including the importance of federal programs that support their health and economic well-being. At CLASP, we also have deep expertise in policies that support children's healthy development, such as promoting access to good nutrition, high quality health care and education, a healthy living environment, and stable, nurturing caregivers. We recognize that harsh immigration policies, such as increased immigration enforcement and the rescission of the protected areas policy, undermine these very foundations.

Without the protected areas policy in place, immigration agents will now be able to carry out enforcement actions in such places on a case-by-case basis, which our own research has shown can result in arrests near child care programs and schools. If Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) presence near such locations become more common, the likelihood also increases that children could witness a parent's detention, arrest, or other encounters with ICE agents.¹ Research shows that children who witness their parents' arrest are more likely to suffer

¹Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews. 2018. "Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children." CLASP. March 1, 2018.

severe impacts on their mental and physical health, negatively impacting their long-term development.²

Without this federal guidance in place, educators and other service providers are also left with confusion and uncertainty as to how to best protect the children and families they serve and what rights they have as providers. During the first Trump Administration, these providers reported being overwhelmed by the impact of anti-immigration rhetoric, the constant change in immigration policies, and heightened stress.³ Those who themselves are immigrants--such as the 1 in 5 early care and education providers--may also have additional concerns about their own families' well-being.

Ending the protected areas policy also has a destabilizing effect on entire communities. Children who witness threats to their classmates, parents, teachers, and care providers may not be able to thrive and meet developmental milestones. Many places that families and children rely on for community and friendship, such as schools, Head Start centers, child care programs, and places of worship, could suddenly become targets, leaving the community as a whole traumatized and paralyzed by the threats of immigration enforcement. Compromising access to these supports in the midst of an onslaught of other immigration policies serves to only further undermine the safety and well-being of immigrant families and communities. And when some of us are not comfortable seeking out health care, we all are less healthy.

Background and History of the Protected Areas Policy:

In 1993, under the Clinton Administration, Immigration and Naturalization services issued a memo restricting immigration enforcement in institutions of education, places of worship, funerals, and other religious ceremonies.⁴ This initial memo has been the foundation to helping create the policy over years, and has had consistent bipartisan support across Presidential Administrations. In 2008, under the Bush Administration ICE released additional field guidance that reaffirmed the 1993 memo.

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/our-childrens-fear-immigration-policys-effects-young-children-2/>.

²Chaudry, Ajay, Randolph Capps, Juan Pedroza, Rosa Maria Castaneda, Robert Santos, and Molly M. Scott. 2010. "Facing Our Future." Urban Institute. February 2, 2010.

<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/facing-our-future>.; Center on Developing Child. 2007. "InBrief: The Impact of Early Adversity on Children's Development." Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. May 20, 2007.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbriefs/inbrief-the-impact-of-early-adversity-on-childrens-development/>.

³ Matthews, Hannah, Rebecca Ullrich, and Wendy Cervantes. 2018. "Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education." CLASP. March 1, 2018.

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/immigration-policy-s-harmful-impacts-early-care-and-education/>.

⁴ Puleo, James A. 1993. "Enforcement Activities at Schools, Places of Worship, or at Funerals or Other Religious Ceremonies." Immigration and Naturalization Service.

<https://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/IMM-Memo-SensLocationsEnforce.pdf>.

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees both Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP), established policies that restrict immigration enforcement actions in certain “sensitive locations.”⁵ These locations included places of worship, schools, health care facilities, and early childhood programs such as licensed child care, preschool, pre-kindergarten, and Head Start programs.

In October 2021, DHS announced a new “protected areas” policy that replaced the 2011 policy.⁶ To clarify the policy, it included locations that were outlined in the previous policy but also added more locations (such as those providing social services and places where children gather, like playgrounds) and improved, consistent implementation. The 2021 policy also had the goal of restricting immigration enforcement actions at or near “protected areas” and went further, explicitly stating that, except in limited circumstances, immigration agents could not conduct arrests, apprehensions, or other enforcement actions in or near these locations. The policy also advised against enforcement actions near a “protected area” and advised the use of judgment as to whether such an action would “restrain people from accessing the area.”

- **What did the 2021 federal policy cover?**

- The policy stated that to the fullest extent possible, ICE should not take enforcement actions in or near a location that would restrain people’s access to essential services or engagement in essential activities. Except in limited circumstances, immigration agents should not conduct arrests, apprehensions, or other enforcement actions in or near the following locations:
 - A school, such as a preschool, primary or secondary school, vocational or trade school, or college or university.
 - A medical or mental healthcare facility, such as a hospital, doctor’s office, health clinic, vaccination or testing site, urgent care center, site that serves pregnant individuals, or community health center.
 - A place of worship or religious study, whether in a structure dedicated to activities of faith (such as a church or religious school) or a temporary facility or location where such activities are taking place.
 - A place where children gather, such as a playground, recreation center, child care center, before- or after-school care center, foster care facility, group home for children, or school bus stop.
 - A social services establishment, such as a crisis center, domestic violence shelter, victims services center, child advocacy center, supervised visitation center, family justice center,

⁵ Morton , John. 2011. Review of Enforcement Actions at or Focused on Sensitive Locations. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. October 24, 2011. <https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>.

⁶ Mayorkas, Alejandro N. 2021. “Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in or near Protected Areas .” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security . https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/21_1027_opa_guidelines-enforcement-actions-in-near-protected-areas.pdf.

community-based organization, facility that serves disabled persons, homeless shelter, drug or alcohol counseling, and treatment facility, or food bank or pantry or other establishment distributing food or other essentials of life to people in need.

- A place where disaster or emergency response and relief is being provided, such as along evacuation routes, where shelter or emergency supplies, food, or water are being distributed, or registration for disaster-related assistance or family reunification is underway.
- A place where a funeral, graveside ceremony, rosary, wedding, or other religious or civil ceremonies or observances occur.
- A place where there is an ongoing parade, demonstration, or rally.
- Exceptions were made - examples of such: enforcement action involves a national security threat, imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm to a person, etc.

On January 20, 2025, the Trump Administration rescinded the Biden Administration’s guidelines for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection enforcement actions in certain “protected areas”, recommending that agents use “common sense”⁷ On January 31st, additional guidance from DHS was issued stating that Assistant Field Office Directors and Assistant Special Agents in Charge are able to provide prior authorization for enforcement actions on case-by-case basis in or near sensitive locations “either verbally or in writing.”⁸ Unfortunately, this guidance lacks clear guardrails to ensure that local field offices are consistently implementing the policy so as to mitigate the chilling effect and potential harm to communities.

Maryland History on ICE at Sensitive Locations

Several attempts have been made over the last several years to pass legislation to create guidance for sensitive locations in Maryland. This was a core provision of different versions of the Trust Act that was introduced over the last decade by Senator Will Smith and many other leaders. In 2019, Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins and Senator Nathan-Pulliam introduced standalone legislation. HB1273 and SB599.⁹ HB1273 passed in the House. In 2020, Attorney

⁷ Department of Homeland Security. 2025. “Statement from a DHS Spokesperson on Directives Expanding Law Enforcement and Ending the Abuse of Humanitarian Parole.” U.S. Department of Homeland Security. January 21, 2025. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/01/21/statement-dhs-spokesperson-directives-expanding-law-enforcement-and-ending-abuse>.

⁸ U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement. (2025, January 31). *Common Sense Enforcement Actions in or near Protected Areas*. Retrieved from:

<https://www.aila.org/library/ice-releases-memo-on-enforcement-actions-in-or-near-protected-areas>

⁹ Wilkins, Acevero, D. Barnes, Feldmark, W Fisher, Lewis, Palakovich Mosby, et al. 2019. Immigration Enforcement -Public Schools, Hospital, and Courthouse Policies.

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/bills/hb/hb1273T.pdf>.; Pulliam, Nathan . 2019. Immigration

General Frosh joined a multistate coalition fighting to halt immigration arrests at state courthouses without a judicial warrant or court order in and around state courthouses throughout the nation.¹⁰

In an amicus brief filed in *State of Washington v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; et al.*, the coalition argues in support of Washington State’s request for a preliminary injunction to immediately halt such arrests by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).¹¹ In 2017, AG Frosh wrote a letter to DHS asking for secure location designations - that the Department designate Maryland’s courts, hospital emergency rooms, and schools to be locations where no enforcement activities will be conducted.¹²

Immigrant Families in Maryland

Maryland is culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse. Approximately 1 million immigrants—about 16 percent of the state population¹³—call Maryland home, and roughly one-third of all children in Maryland have at least one parent who was born outside the United States.¹⁴ The majority of immigrants in Maryland are from the Americas (41 percent) or Asia (30 percent).¹⁵

Enforcement – County Boards of Education, Public Institutions of 3 Higher Education, and Hospitals – Policies. <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/bills/sb/sb0599F.pdf>.

¹⁰ Maryland Office of the Attorney General. 2020. “Attorney General Frosh Joins Multistate Coalition Fighting to Halt Immigration Arrests at State Courthouses.” Maryland Office of the Attorney General. <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2020/011720.pdf>.

¹¹ Amici States (Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and the District of Columbia). 2020. *State of Washington v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, et al*, Case No. 2:19-cv-02043-TSZ. United States District Court Western District of Washington at Seattle.

¹² Frosh, Brian E. 2017. State of Maryland Office of the Attorney General. https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/News%20Documents/Homeland%20Security_Ltr_030117.pdf.

¹³ US Census Bureau. 2024. “U.S. Foreign-Born Population: 2019-2023.” Census.gov. December 12, 2024. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/foreign-born-population-2019-2023.html>.

¹⁴ The Urban Institute. Data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2017 and 2018 American Community Survey.

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 2024. “U.S. Foreign-Born Population: 2019-2023.”

	Maryland	United States
Share of children with at least one immigrant parent	31%	25%
Total population of children	1,354,000	72,818,000

Source: The Urban Institute. Data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2021 and 2022 American Community Survey.

The Case for a Protected Areas Policy

CLASP has worked for years to advocate for national, state, and local policies that ensure people are able to access the supports and services they need to thrive. Heightened immigration enforcement efforts undermine access to critical programs, putting families' health and well-being at risk, including for U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families. In light of the Trump administration's recent action to rescind the protected areas policy at the federal level, we urge states and local governments to consider legislation and advance protected areas policies and guidelines that restrict immigration enforcement actions in these critical places, such as Maryland's SB 0828 and HB 1006.

The Case for Guidance at Schools:

1. **Access to Education** - A basic education is critical for every child to be able to develop into thriving, productive adults. If a parent is afraid to drop off their child at school, absenteeism increases. A recent lawsuit by Denver Public Schools claims that the rescission of the protected areas policy has led to drop in attendance.¹⁶
2. **Fear and Trauma** - The presence of ICE agents has a psychological and emotional impact.¹⁷ The environment of fear impacts children, families, and the entire community - leading to diminished academic performance and long-term psychological effects.¹⁸

¹⁶ Riddell, R. (2025, February 14). *Denver Public Schools sues over Trump policy allowing on-campus ice raids*. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/denver-public-schools-sues-over-trump-immigration-policy/740145/>

¹⁷ Hacker, Karen, Jocelyn Chu, Carolyn Leung, Robert Marra, Alex Pirie, Mohamed Brahim, Margaret English, Joshua Beckmann, Dolores Acevedo-Garcia, and Robert P. Marlin. 2011. "The Impact of Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Immigrant Health: Perceptions of Immigrants in Everett, Massachusetts, USA." *Social Science & Medicine* 73 (4): 586–94. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.06.007>.

¹⁸ Gándara, Patricia, Lucrecia Santibañez, Jongyeon Joy Ee, and Julieta Rico. 2023. "The Impact of a Broken Immigration System on U.S. Students and Schools - UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools." *UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools - UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools*. December 5, 2023. <https://transformschoools.ucla.edu/research/the-impact-of-a-broken-immigration-system-on-us-students-and-schools/>.

3. **Learning Disruptions** - ICE enforcement can disrupt the educational process, including decreased attendance. A 2018 publication by the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research reported that zealous application of immigration laws causes school enrollment to drop and can set back the education of young people, including many U.S. citizens.¹⁹ The study found that Latino enrollment dropped nearly 10% in communities where local law enforcement collaborated with ICE.

The Case for Guidance at Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities:

1. **Ensuring Access to Care.** Maryland has positioned itself as a national leader in healthcare access, recognizing that this right is vital to maintaining a healthy and productive population in our state.²⁰ Allowing ICE to access hospitals and other healthcare centers undermines this progress, creating an environment where individuals without permanent immigration status will not feel safe getting the services they need.²¹ This includes particularly vulnerable populations, such as pregnant individuals or those with serious medical conditions that require regular treatment.
2. **Supporting Healthcare Professionals.** Allowing ICE enforcement in places where medical professionals are working is extremely disruptive to those environments - and may even cause healthcare professionals to be afraid to come to work. Maryland is home to a large number of healthcare workers who may themselves not feel comfortable coming to work in an environment that is subject to ICE enforcement, including those with DACA, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or other forms of temporary immigration status.²² Chilling the ability of these professionals to do their jobs will place an additional burden on our healthcare infrastructure at a time when we can least afford it, as federal support for access to care diminishes.

¹⁹Dee, Thomas S. , and Mark Murphy. 2018. "How Strict Immigration Enforcement Harms Schoolchildren." Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR). Stanford University. October 2018. <https://siepr.stanford.edu/publications/policy-brief/how-strict-immigration-enforcement-harms-schoolchildren>.

²⁰ Cathryn Paul. 2020. "Opinion: Why ICE Doesn't Belong in Hospitals - Maryland Matters." Maryland Matters. May 2020. <https://marylandmatters.org/2020/05/01/opinion-why-ice-doesnt-belong-in-hospitals/>.

²¹ Young, Maria-Elena De Trinidad, Sharon Tafolla, Altaf Saadi, May Sudhinaraset, Lei Chen, and Nadereh Pourat. 2023. "Beyond 'Chilling Effects.'" Medical Care Publish Ahead of Print (March). <https://doi.org/10.1097/mlr.0000000000001839>.

²²Institute for Immigrant Research. 2018. "Immigrants in Healthcare Occupations in Maryland Figure 1. Immigrants in the State of Maryland 2018 NUMBERS at a GLANCE." https://d101vc9winf8ln.cloudfront.net/documents/34917/original/Immigrants_in_Healthcare_Occupations_in_Maryland.pdf?1587658275.

Impact of Immigration Enforcement on Children

Fear of deportation casts a cloud of uncertainty and danger over common activities that affect immigrant families' ability to live their lives. This phenomenon restricting daily life—commonly referred to as the “chilling effect”—causes families to avoid seeking out basic necessities, from medical care to social services.²³ When immigration enforcement officers have the ability to show up at early education centers, healthcare facilities, playgrounds, schools, and places of worship, mixed-status families with children will not seek services in these places as often or stop going to these critical places altogether. In this current political climate, many providers and advocates are already reporting on this chilling effect and its impact on school attendance and academic achievement, child care attendance and participation, and delivery of timely health care.²⁴ Moreover, an environment of fear negatively affects children's emotional well-being, sometimes impacting their healthy development.

Early Care and Educational Impacts

The prospect of immigration enforcement authorities in schools and child care centers threaten the safety of both people who work to educate and care for children as well as children and their families. Overall, more than 1 in 8 workers in the U.S. education sector is an immigrant, or over 2.1 million people, and nearly 1 in 5 child care workers is foreign-born.²⁵ CLASP led a six-state study during the first Trump administration interviewing child care and early education teachers, among other providers, which found that these providers were struggling to support children and families who were under additional stress, including some who had experienced the detention or deportation of a parent.²⁶ Workers reported anxiety about increased incidents of racism and

²³ Xu, Qingwen, and Kalina Brabeck. 2012. “Service Utilization for Latino Children in Mixed-Status Families.” *Social Work Research* 36 (3): 209–21. <https://doi.org/10.2307/42659834>.; Heinrich, Carolyn, Mónica Hernández, and Mason Shero. 2022. “Repercussions of a Raid: Health and Education Outcomes of Children Entangled in Immigration Enforcement.” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 42 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22443>.

²⁴ Riddell, Roger. 2025. “Denver Public Schools Sues over Trump Policy Allowing On-Campus ICE Raids.” *K-12 Dive*. February 14, 2025. <https://www.k12dive.com/news/denver-public-schools-sues-over-trump-immigration-policy/740145/>; Mader, Jackie. 2025. “Parents Pull Kids from Childcare as Immigration Fears Hit US's Youngest.” *The Guardian*. February 7, 2025. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/feb/07/us-immigration-childcare-workers>; Schorsch, Kristen. 2025. “Fearful amid ICE Crackdowns, Some Immigrants Are Skipping Health Care.” *Transcript*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/nx-s1-5290063>.

²⁵ New American Economy. 2021. “Immigrants and the U.S. Educational System.” *New American Economy Research Fund*. August 16, 2021. <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/immigrants-america-educational-system/>; Ali, Umair, Jessica H Brown, and Chris M Herbst. 2024. “Secure Communities as Immigration Enforcement: How Secure Is the Child Care Market?” *Journal of Public Economics* 233 (April): 105101–1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105101>.

²⁶ Matthews, Hannah, Rebecca Ullrich, and Wendy Cervantes. 2018. “Immigration Policy's Harmful Impacts on Early Care and Education.” CLASP. March 2018.

xenophobia and were additionally concerned about the legal status of their own family members and friends. They were required to navigate complex immigration policies, provide mental health support to children, and inform parents about resources, all with limited time and money while still trying to do the day to day work of caring for and educating young children. The threat of immigration enforcement puts undue burden on those who work and care for all our nation's children.

Immigration enforcement impacts the child care industry as a whole. Studies have found that increased immigration enforcement mechanisms reduce children's participation in Head Start, center-based child care programs, reduce the supply and wages of immigrant and native workers in the center-based sector, and reduce the number of center-based facilities overall.²⁷ The decrease in center-based child care availability and participation means more children are pushed to lower-quality child care settings, which may slow their cognitive and developmental progress.²⁸ In essence, increased immigration enforcement can further destabilize an already precarious industry, threatening child care supply and increasing costs for all parents.

Additionally, there is robust evidence that heightened immigration enforcement results in decreases in K-12 school enrollment among Hispanic children and harms academic performance and engagement among minority students.²⁹ Following the 2019 Mississippi worksite raid, children were absent from schools for several days, with some families hiding in their homes for weeks with curtains pulled over their windows.³⁰ Providers in K-12 settings have reported that Latino students directly expressed fear and concern over immigration

<https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/immigration-policy-s-harmful-impacts-early-care-and-education/>; Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews. 2018. "Our Children's Fear."

²⁷Ali, Umair, Jessica H Brown, and Chris M Herbst. 2024. "Secure Communities as Immigration Enforcement: How Secure Is the Child Care Market?" *Journal of Public Economics* 233 (April): 105101–1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2024.105101>; Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews. 2018. "Our Children's Fear."; Children Thrive Action Network. 2021. "Research Brief: How a Pathway to Citizenship Can Help Children Thrive - Children Thrive Action Network." Children Thrive Action Network. October 28, 2021. <https://childrethriveaction.org/2021/10/research-brief-how-a-pathway-to-citizenship-can-help-children-thrive/>.

²⁸ Ali, Umair, Jessica H Brown, and Chris M Herbst. 2024. "Secure Communities as Immigration Enforcement: How Secure Is the Child Care Market?"

²⁹ Dee, Thomas S., and Mark Murphy. 2018. "How Strict Immigration Enforcement Harms Schoolchildren." Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR). Stanford University. October 2018.

<https://siepr.stanford.edu/publications/policy-brief/how-strict-immigration-enforcement-harms-schoolchildren/>; Ee, Jongyeon, and Patricia Gándara. 2020. "The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Nation's Schools." *American Educational Research Journal* 57 (2): 000283121986299.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219862998>; Bellows, Laura. 2021. "The Effect of Immigration Enforcement on School Engagement: Evidence from 287(G) Programs in North Carolina." *AERA Open* 7 (1): 233285842110394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211039467>.

³⁰Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Vanessa Meraz. 2020. "The Day That ICE Came: How Worksite Raids Are Once Again Harming Children and Families." CLASP. June 13, 2020. <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/day-ice-came-how-worksite-raids-are-once-again-harming-children-and/>.

enforcement, negatively affecting their academic performance.³¹ In a survey of educators during the first Trump administration, one high school administrator said that children in immigrant families “are not thinking about college, or the test next week, or what is being taught in the classroom today. They are thinking about their family and whether they will still be a family; whether their family will remain intact.”³² Moreover, immigration enforcement impacts all students, not just those in immigrant families; researchers have found that absences affect overall school achievement scores and school funding, resulting in a “vicious cycle of underachievement.”³³

Impacts on Health Seeking Behaviors and Health

Even when the sensitive locations policy was in place, there were instances of ICE detaining immigrants visiting loved ones at hospitals or at a bus stop outside a hospital.³⁴ These actions serve to spread fear among immigrants and prevent them from enrolling in health care programs, including among children of noncitizens.³⁵ As a result, immigrants and their children delay obtaining health care which may exacerbate health conditions that could have been ameliorated or avoided altogether through preventive health care screenings. This results in increased complex health emergencies, increased emergency room visits, and increases in societal costs for uncompensated care.³⁶

During site visits conducted by CLASP in 2017, parents were scared to take their children to doctors or clinics for critical health services. For example, parents in rural Pennsylvania shared their reluctance to take their children to the emergency room at night because it was known that

³¹ Ruskin, Emily. 2020. “A Generation at Risk: The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on UnidosUS-Affiliated Classrooms and Educators.” UnidosUS. March 2020. <https://unidosus.org/publications/2024-a-generation-at-risk-the-impact-of-immigration-enforcement-on-unidosus-affiliated-classrooms-and-educators/>.

³² Ee, Jongyeon, and Patricia Gándara. 2020. “The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Nation’s Schools.” *American Educational Research Journal* 57 (2): 000283121986299. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219862998>.

³³ Ee, Jongyeon, and Patricia Gándara. 2020. “The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Nation’s Schools.”

³⁴ Physicians for Human Rights. 2018. “Physicians for Human Rights Establishing Sanctuary Hospitals: Protecting the Right to Access Health Care Physicians for Human Rights Fact Sheet.”

<https://phr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PHR-Sanctuary-Hospitals-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf>; Shepherd, Katie. 2017. “ICE Arrested an Undocumented Immigrant Just Outside a Portland Hospital.” *Willamette Week*. October 31, 2017.

<https://www.wweek.com/news/courts/2017/10/31/ice-arrested-an-undocumented-immigrant-just-outside-a-portland-hospital/>.

³⁵ Watson, Tara. 2014. “Inside the Refrigerator: Immigration Enforcement and Chilling Effects in Medicaid Participation.” *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 6 (3): 313–38. <https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.6.3.313>.

³⁶ Mutanuka, Mambwe. 2020. “The Intersection of Health Policy and Immigration: Consequences of Immigrants’ Fear of Arrests in U.S. Hospitals.” *Annals Of Health Law Advance Directive* Vol 30 (1): 217-222.

<https://heinonline-org.prx.law.columbia.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/anlsadced30&div=35&id=&page=&collection=journals>.

ICE patrolled the highway to the nearest hospital.³⁷ One worksite raid in 2018 in Tennessee occurred at the same time as a community health event, which meant that Hispanic families too afraid to venture out of their homes missed out on vaccinations, basic health screenings, and information offered to community members attending the event. Many Hispanic families subsequently stopped attending other health-related appointments with their children altogether.³⁸ With immigration authorities having zero limitations on where they can apprehend and arrest people they suspect to be in the country illegally, the likelihood that children will become isolated from the larger community and miss critical health care milestones like vaccinations and well-child visits is amplified, threatening the immediate and long-term health of children.³⁹

Impacts on Child Mental Health

Numerous studies demonstrate the connection of both the threat of immigration enforcement as well as the detention and deportation of a family member to adverse mental health, behavioral problems, and health issues for children in immigrant families. CLASP's 2017 six-state study found that children as young as three-years-old were expressing fear about losing a parent to deportation and demonstrating those fears through words and troubling behaviors; one child was described as biting his fingertips to the point of bleeding.⁴⁰ Even children whose parents have lawful immigration status expressed fear and concern about parent separation. Research consistently shows that hardship and distress in children's early years can particularly compromise their healthy development and growth in the short and long terms.⁴¹

After a Tennessee workplace raid in April 2018 detained 97 undocumented workers, behavioral issues and substance use among local Hispanic students increased, including among U.S. citizen children whose families were not directly involved in the raid. Substance use disorders

³⁷ Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews. 2018. "Our Children's Fear"

³⁸ Heinrich, Carolyn, Mónica Hernández, and Mason Shero. 2022. "Repercussions of a Raid: Health and Education Outcomes of Children Entangled in Immigration Enforcement." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 42 (2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22443>.

³⁹ Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews. 2018. "Our Children's Fear"

⁴⁰ Cervantes, Wendy, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews. 2018. "Our Children's Fear"

⁴¹ National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. 2010. "Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children." Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. May 28, 2010. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/working-paper/persistent-fear-and-anxiety-can-affect-young-childrens-learning-and-development/>; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. 2007. "The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap between What We Know and What We Do." Developing Child. 2007.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/report/the-science-of-early-childhood-development-closing-the-gap-between-what-we-know-and-what-we-do/>; Shonkoff, Jack P., and Deborah A. Phillips. 2000. "From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development." PubMed. 2000. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25077268/>; Teicher, Martin H., Susan L. Andersen, Ann Polcari, Carl M. Anderson, Carryl P. Navalta, and Dennis M. Kim. 2003. "The Neurobiological Consequences of Early Stress and Childhood Maltreatment." *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews* 27 (1-2): 33–44. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0149-7634\(03\)00007-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0149-7634(03)00007-1).

during the raid year was 1.5 times above the average rate, while diagnoses of self-harm, suicide attempts, or suicidal ideation increased by 50 percent.⁴² Nearly half of U.S.-born Latino adolescents are concerned, at least some of the time, with the personal impacts of U.S. immigration policy (44%), family separation caused by deportation of a loved one (44%), and a family member being reported to an immigration office (41%). These adolescents are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety, sleep issues, and adverse blood pressure changes.⁴³

The threats to children’s mental health have devastating consequences. More recently in Texas, news outlets reported the suicide of an 11-year old child on February 8, due to bullying at school about her family’s immigration status, including threats from peers to call ICE on her family.⁴⁴ Rumors about ICE coming to the school likely came after an email sent to parents that addressed President Trump’s new immigration policies, including the removal of the protected areas policy. Unfortunately, few mental health resources exist specifically for impacted children, and even fewer health resources overall that overcome language and cultural barriers. Research indicates, however, that providing access to legal status has a protective impact on children’s mental health. This bill could be a protective factor for children in immigrant families and mitigate the harm that unlimited enforcement poses.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we urge Maryland’s General Assembly to advance protected areas policies and guidelines that restrict immigration enforcement actions in these critical places, such as SB 0828 and HB 1006, in the wake of the Trump administration’s recent action to rescind the protected areas policy at the federal level.

Our testimony includes citations to research and documents for the benefit of the General Assembly in reviewing our testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact Suma Setty (ssetty@clasp.org) and Priya Pandey (ppandey@clasp.org) if you have any questions or need any further information.

⁴² Heinrich et al., 2022. “Repercussions of a Raid”

⁴³ Eskenazi, Brenda, Carolyn A. Fahey, Katherine Kogut, Robert Gunier, Jacqueline Torres, Nancy A. Gonzales, Nina Holland, and Julianna Deardorff. 2019. “Association of Perceived Immigration Policy Vulnerability with Mental and Physical Health among US-Born Latino Adolescents in California.” *JAMA Pediatrics* 173 (8): 744–53. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.1475>.

⁴⁴ Killough, Ashley, and Ed Lavandera. 2025. “Chatter and Rumors about ICE Went on for Days at School of Texas Girl Who Died by Suicide.” CNN. February 21, 2025. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/20/us/texas-ice-jocelynn-rojo-carranza/index.html>.