

Patapsco Friends Meeting (Quakers)
SUPPORT: [SB828](#) ([HB1006](#)) *Protecting Sensitive Locations Act*
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE

March 4, 2025

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a community of faith based on an experience of a transforming power named many ways: the Inner Light, the Spirit of Christ, the Guide, the Living God, the Divine Presence. Quakers hold as the basis of this faith the belief that God endows each human being with a measure of the Divine Spirit. Quakerism is a religious fellowship based on common religious ideals and experiences.

Patapsco Friends Meeting is a part of a larger regional community of Quakers called Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM.) Although we are without a binding creed, our beliefs are based on Judeo-Christian heritage and adherence to the Inner Light, Spirit of Christ, and that of God in everyone. Quaker experiences of the Divine affect what we do in our personal lives, what we believe and how we work for changes in the wider world. “Testimonies” are what Quakers call the ways we live and act based on our beliefs. As Friends seek truth, peace, and harmony in the Light of that Spirit, our testimonies emerge. The immanence of God implies that all persons are children of the Divine and brothers and sisters of one another. We also wish to affirm our belief that Quakerism is God’s “big tent,” politically. We welcome people with all sorts of political beliefs — Republicans, Democrats, conservatives, liberals, socialists, Libertarians, and Independents—to our community.

On January 27, 2025, a coalition of Quaker Meetings filed suit in a Maryland federal court to block a recent change in federal policy that now allows federal immigration enforcement officials to enter houses of worship, and other sensitive locations, for enforcement purposes. One of the plaintiffs in the suit is *BYM*: “Our religious beliefs call us to build relationships across geographical and theological lines. Our membership in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, DC, and the greater mid-Atlantic region includes immigrant Friends. The very threat of government officials wearing ICE-emblazoned jackets outside of our religious service will have a significant impact on our communities and ability to practice our faith. We remain committed to our religious command and will use the tools available to defend our membership and faith.”

On February 24, 2025, the U.S. District Court of Maryland issued an order blocking the Trump administration’s policy that enables immigration officials to enter houses of worship indiscriminately to conduct immigration enforcement operations. The order, which outlines the ways in which the Trump administration policy is likely to violate religious freedom and expression rights, applies only to the Plaintiffs’ houses of worship, not all.

The filed suit in federal court affirms the importance of state-level advocacy in Maryland to support passing the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (SB828/HB1006) and other immigrant protections, during the 2025 General Assembly. No one should hesitate to seek life-saving care, attend worship services, or attend school due to fear of immigration enforcement. This bill directs the Attorney General, in consultation with certain stakeholders, to develop guidelines to assist public schools, hospitals, and courthouses to draft policies that limit civil immigration enforcement activities on their premises in order to ensure these facilities remain safe and accessible to all. It authorizes public schools, hospitals, and courthouses to establish and publish policies that limit immigration enforcement on their premises to the fullest extent possible.

The spiritual and social testimonies of Quakers, and statements of our Friends, lead us to support the proposed emergency legislation to protect our immigrant friends. We urge you to issue a FAVORABLE report for SB828.

Your Friends,
Eileen and Richard Stanzione, Co-Clerks
Patapsco Friends Meeting