



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 4th, 2025

SB828

**Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)
Judicial Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 828**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act seeks to establish clear guidelines and policies regarding immigration enforcement at designated sensitive locations to protect vulnerable individuals and uphold community trust. Under this legislation, the Attorney General is required to develop guidelines that ensure sensitive locations—such as places of worship, schools, hospitals, and courthouses—remain safe spaces free from the fear of immigration enforcement actions. Additionally, state agencies operating within these locations must adopt policies aligned with these guidelines or provide written notice explaining the decision not to implement such policies. This ensures transparency, accountability, and consistency in the protection of immigrant communities.

This legislation aligns with the principles of human dignity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. Immigrants, especially undocumented individuals, often face significant fear and uncertainty, which can deter them from accessing essential services such as healthcare, education, and legal assistance. By ensuring that sensitive locations remain accessible and protected from immigration enforcement actions, this bill upholds the dignity of individuals and fosters a society that prioritizes care over exclusion. Solidarity calls on us to stand with immigrants as brothers and sisters, ensuring they are treated with compassion and fairness rather than fear and marginalization. The Catholic commitment to the common good further reinforces the need for policies that build trust between immigrant communities and local institutions, rather than policies that drive individuals into hiding due to fear of deportation.

Senate Bill 828 benefits individuals, communities, and society by reinforcing trust in public institutions, allowing immigrants to access critical services without fear, and ensuring that enforcement actions do not disrupt essential community functions. It promotes public health and safety, as immigrants will feel safe seeking medical care and reporting crimes without fear of immigration consequences. Schools will remain places for learning rather than sites of trauma for

children worried about family separation. Additionally, the bill strengthens social cohesion by ensuring that all Marylanders—regardless of immigration status—can participate fully in their communities without the threat of unjust enforcement. In upholding justice and human dignity, this legislation reflects our collective moral obligation to protect the most vulnerable and foster a society built on compassion, trust, and fairness. Let's recognize humanity in every individual and acknowledge that living in fear is something no individual or family should face.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 828**.