



## **Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828**

SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies

(Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

February 19, 2025

SB: Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee

**Do The Most Good** is pleased to offer a **favorable testimony** in **strong support** of **SB 828/ Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**.

**Do the Most Good** is a grassroots organization based in Montgomery County, MD with members across Montgomery County. My name is Gwen Stewart and I have been an active member of **DTMG** on the steering committee since 2017. We partner with organizations in political action and civic engagement to further inclusive, progressive values and act with respect and kindness as an all-embracing community, while standing up to hatred and bigotry in every form. We act locally to make our community a more inclusive, safer place and support others dedicated to these goals.

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. In Montgomery County we have a Tuberculosis rate above the national average. We have had cases of multidrug resistant TB in Montgomery County. It is imperative that our immigrant population feel safe and unafraid to seek treatment. Protecting all who live in our community is vital for the wellbeing and health of the entire community.

In 2014 during the Ebola crisis, when I was the Manager of Infection Prevention at Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, we worked collaboratively across the state with other health facilities to care for the community. When managing a health crisis in a community, it is vital that all residents have access to treatment for the protection of the whole. Isolating a large portion of our community due to fear and confusion effects the entire population.

**Do The Most Good** stands with immigrant communities and supports the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act because it will:

1. **Protect Access to Essential Services:** No one should have to choose between life-saving medical care and the risk of family separation. Children deserve to attend school without fear, and individuals must be able to seek justice in our courts without the threat of detention.
2. **Enhance Public Safety:** When immigrants feel safe accessing services and reporting crimes, our entire community benefits. Fear of enforcement discourages individuals from cooperating with law enforcement, which in turn hampers public safety efforts.
3. **Strengthen Community Trust:** By establishing clear boundaries for immigration enforcement, we foster trust between immigrant communities and the institutions meant to serve them. This trust is essential for maintaining a healthy, vibrant, and cohesive society.

**Do The Most Good urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB**

**828**