

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828/HB 1006
SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and
Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 19, 2025

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

Martha Dominguez Luya, LMSW, is pleased to offer **a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828/HB 1006 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).**

I am a Mental Health Therapist at a community school in Prince George's County, where I primarily work with immigrant communities. I am deeply passionate about the well-being of my students, staff, and their families, and I am dedicated to supporting their mental health needs in every way I can. This commitment to our community is why I strongly support the bill to protect sensitive locations from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions.

Our school serves a high population of immigrant families, many of whom are navigating the complexities of living in a new country. In addition to the trauma these families have experienced before, during, and after their journey to the United States, they now face the constant fear of being targeted by ICE. As a mental health provider, I work tirelessly to ensure that our students and their families have the resources and support they need to thrive. My mission is to create a safe, welcoming environment where all students feel secure enough to focus on their education and mental well-being. However, this mission has become increasingly challenging and limited due to recent executive orders regarding ICE.

For over a decade, federal policy limited 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 our school, I have witnessed firsthand the impact of this uncertainty. Parents have expressed fears about attending parent-teacher conferences or taking their children to school because they worry that ICE might be waiting outside. We have also seen a decrease in attendance among our student body. Additionally, students have come to my office with heightened anxiety about their

safety at school due to the possibility of ICE arriving. This fear creates a barrier to their education, mental health, and sense of stability. It is difficult for children to focus on learning when they fear for the safety of their families and themselves.

Martha Dominguez Luya, LMSW, 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.

Martha Dominguez Luya **urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828/HB 1006.**