

# Education Advocacy Coalition

## for Students with Disabilities

**SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE**

**SENATE BILL 828**

**Immigration Enforcement—Sensitive Locations—Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**

**MARCH 4, 2025**

### **POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Education Advocacy Coalition for Students with Disabilities (EAC), a coalition of nearly 50 organizations and individuals concerned with education policy for students with disabilities in Maryland, strongly supports Senate Bill 828, which would define “sensitive location” and require the Attorney General, in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, to develop guidelines to limit immigration enforcement activities at entities operating at sensitive locations. The EAC particularly appreciates that among other provisions Senate Bill 828 defines “sensitive location” broadly to include schools, mental health and medical care facilities, places where children gather, including playgrounds, recreational centers, childcare and before and after-school care centers, foster care facilities, group homes, and school bus stops, and social services establishments, including facilities that serve people with disabilities, as well as courthouses, and food banks and pantries.

In 1972, the United States Supreme Court ruled that all children, regardless of immigration status, have the right to public education. *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202. Similarly, the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et. seq.* guarantees a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities who need special education and related services in order to make educational progress. The IDEA stresses the importance of schools and parents working together to properly identify the needs of children with disabilities and to ensure that appropriate and effective instructional services and supports are provided by the school. The IDEA and Maryland law contain provisions about including parents at meetings, and these laws also require translation of documents and provision of interpreters at IEP meetings if necessary; ensuring that parents have the opportunity to be active participants in the IEP process is one of the cornerstones of both federal and state law.

However, schools are hampered in their effort to secure parental participation, and children suffer the consequences, if their parents do not come to school to participate in the special education process and work with school staff to help their children succeed because of their fear of arrest by Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials on school grounds.

School should be a refuge for all children; it should be the place where they come to grow and learn academically, developmentally and socially. This is especially true for children with disabilities, whose parents have the right to help shape the special education they receive and

Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony: Senate Bill 828

March 4, 2025

Page Two

to participate as full members of the IEP team. Children and parents should not live in fear that the simple act of going to school every day might result in the trauma of arrest and separation simply because of how they arrived in the United States.

Because EAC members represent or work with families whose children have disabilities that may, and often do, require extensive medical treatment, ancillary therapies, counseling, behavior support in addition to other specialized services, the EAC particularly appreciates that Senate Bill 828 includes within its ambit all of the places where children receive these services. EAC members also appreciate that Senate Bill 828 includes playgrounds, before and after-school care facilities, bus stops, and other places at which children gather.

Families should be able to live their lives free from the fear that immigration officials will raid the places families need to be to ensure that their children with disabilities receive appropriate services and supports that enable them to be healthy, to be able to learn with their peers, and to lead meaningful lives in the community.

For these reasons, the Education Advocacy Coalition supports Senate Bill 828.

Contact: Leslie Seid Margolis at [lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org](mailto:lesliem@disabilityrightsmd.org) or 410-727-6352, ext. 2505.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene A. Almazan, Selene Almazan Law, LLC

Rene Averitt-Sanzone, The Parents' Place of Maryland

Linda Barton, MSED, Education Consultant

Beth Benevides, Autism Society of Maryland, Co-Chair, Education Advocacy Coalition

Ellen A. Callegary, Attorney (Retired)

Melanie Carlos, xMinds (Partnership for Extraordinary Minds)

Stephanie Carr, S.L. Carr Education Consultants, LLC

Rich Ceruolo, Parent

Michelle Davis, M.Ed., ABCs for Life Success

Jennifer Engel Fisher, Weinfeld Education Group

Lisa Frank and Andrea Bennett, Special Kids Company

Beth Ann Hancock, Charting the Course, LLC

Kalman Hettleman, Independent Advocate

Morgan Durand Horvath, M.Ed., Abilities Network

Rosemary Kitzinger and Marjorie Guldan, Bright Futures, LLC

Ande Kolp, The Arc Maryland

Rachel London, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

Leslie Seid Margolis, Disability Rights Maryland, Co-Chair, Education Advocacy Coalition

Monica Martinez, Martinez Advocacy

Education Advocacy Coalition Testimony: Senate Bill 828

March 4, 2025

Page Three

Beth Nolan, MAT, Education Team Allies

Sumaiya Olatunde, H2D Counseling

Ellen O'Neill, Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center

Ronza Othman, National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

Kate Raab and Nicole Joseph, Law Office of Nicole Joseph

Jaime Seaton, BGS Law, LLC

Karleen Spitulnik, Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Ronnetta Stanley, M.Ed., Loud Voices Together

Guy Stephens, Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint

Wayne Steedman, Steedman Law Group, LLC

Maureen van Stone, Kendall Eaton, Genevieve Hornik, Project HEAL at Kennedy Krieger  
Institute

Jessica Williams, Education Due Process Solutions, LLC

Liz Zogby, Maryland Down Syndrome Advocacy Coalition