

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 28, 2025

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

I, Katya Medrano, am 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 the Youth Director of my local church. Additionally, I serve as a Youth Area Coordinator for my church conference, which is made up of sister churches in the area that my local church is a part of. This means that I also work closely with youth across various congregations to foster leadership, community service, and spiritual growth.

Our church is a place of worship and a sanctuary for youth and their families — a safe space where they gather for mentorship, education, and emotional support. Many of the young people I work with come from immigrant families who contribute positively to our community but live with the constant fear of sudden enforcement actions in places where they should feel secure.

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.

I have witnessed firsthand the distress this has caused. Some youth have expressed anxiety about attending church events or participating in community programs, fearing that their family members might be at risk. This fear undermines our mission to provide an environment of growth, hope, and community trust. No one should have to choose between accessing essential services and protecting their family from separation.

I stand 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.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828/HB 1006.