



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony Prepared for the
Judicial Proceedings Committee
on
Senate Bill 828
March 4, 2025
Position: Favorable

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify about human rights and human movement. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with three synods in every part of the State.

Our global communion has addressed human movement since 1939.

In 2019 we adopted these commitments in national assembly:

- *To reaffirm the long-term and growing commitment of this church to migrants and refugees...as exemplified most recently in the comprehensive strategy Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities (AMMPARO)*
- *To request that appropriate staff on the AMMPARO team, LIRS (now Global Refuge), and the Domestic Mission, Global Mission, and Mission Advancement units review the existing strategies and practices by (our) five current sanctuary synods and develop a plan for additional tools that provide for education and discernment around sanctuary*
- *To declare the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America a sanctuary church body...*

Federal policy designates schools, medical facilities, and worship sites as “sensitive locations” for immigration enforcement. One reason cited is their beneficial and necessary services in the general public. Well and good. But our commitment to sanctuary, a faith practice originating in the early Middle Ages, is also about our identity as a people assembled before God with obligations to the sacred. The long tradition with its origins in Hebrew Scripture tells us to keep our doors open to the stranger, sojourner, and inquirer. People without papers come into our buildings, worshipping assemblies, and fellowships because we are a people before God and the sacred. We are on public record that we will not collude or cooperate with policing actions directed at people without papers, especially in our facilities and organizations.

For that reason we urge maintaining the “sensitive locations” policy. Like the similar *House Bill 1006* which we’ve supported, **Senate Bill 828** may assist people who need sanctuary address immediate and urgent issues, and help their immediate communities become safer and more socially functional. We urge a favorable report.

Lee Hudson