

Date of Hearing: March 4, 2025

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TESTIMONY ON SB 828 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies
(Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Jo Shifrin

OPENING: My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB 828, Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

A hundred years ago or so, my grandparents came to this country as immigrants from Russia, Ukraine, and Poland. They worked hard and assimilated into the fabric of this country. Immigrants before and since have come to this country and contributed to its greatness.

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 in policy has created 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.

If enacted, SB 828 will require the Attorney General to develop guidelines relating to immigration enforcement at certain sensitive locations, and require State agencies that operate at these locations to adopt those policies or provide written notice of a decision not to adopt those policies. SB 828 will protect access to essential services such as medical care, allow children to attend school without fear, and enable individuals to seek justice in the courts without the threat of detention. When immigrants feel safe accessing services and reporting crimes, the entire Maryland community is safer. By establishing clear boundaries for immigration enforcement, trust will be fostered between immigrant communities and the institutions that serve them. Trust is necessary for maintaining a healthy, vibrant, and cohesive society.

I respectfully urge the Committee to return a favorable report on SB 828.