



Center for Salud/Health and Opportunity for Latinos
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Center for Child and Community Health Research
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SB 828

Favorable

TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Centro SOL

DATE: February 20, 2025

Centro SOL supports HB1006 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Centro SOL is pleased to offer a **favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**.

Centro SOL (Center for Health and Opportunity for Latinos at Johns Hopkins) is committed to promoting equity in health and providing high quality care to all of our patients including the large and growing Latino population in the State of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB1006. Note: This testimony does not necessarily represent the views of Johns Hopkins University.

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.

With the possibility of ICE operations in medical facilities, including Johns Hopkins, many Latino immigrants in Baltimore are now apprehensive about seeking necessary medical care. This fear is particularly acute among undocumented individuals who worry that visiting a hospital or clinic could result in detention or deportation. Consequently, health issues may go untreated, posing risks not only to individuals but also to public health at large.

The presence of ICE agents in or near schools has led to increased anxiety among students and parents in Baltimore City. Reports indicate that some parents are so fearful that they have



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provided copies of their children's legal documents directly to teachers to preempt potential issues and many families are not sending their children to school. This climate of fear will result in decreased school attendance and hinder students' ability to focus on their education. Educators have expressed concerns, noting that it's challenging to teach students who are preoccupied with concerns about their safety and that of their families.

Historically, places of worship have served as sanctuaries for immigrants, but the fear of ICE has eroded this trust and sense of refuge. Centro SOL holds several of its community programs within local churches in Baltimore City. The potential for ICE enforcement actions in these spaces has caused families to reconsider participating in activities that will improve their physical and mental health.

Overall, the increased ICE presence in previously protected areas has instilled a pervasive sense of fear among Latino immigrants in Baltimore, adversely affecting their health, education, legal engagement, and community support systems.

Centro SOL 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.

Centro SOL **urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828.**

Signatures:

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