

SB#828_Louise Weissman_FAV

Hearing Date: March 4, 2025
Louise Weissman
Greenbelt 20770

**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: Louise Weissman

My name is Louise Weissman. I am a resident of Greenbelt in District 22. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

I was born and raised in Boston, MA. I am the daughter and granddaughter of Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants who came to the United States from Eastern Europe before and just after WWI. I do not pretend to equate my family's experience with those of our current immigrants. But escaping persecution and/or poverty and dreaming of a better quality of life for our families were and are historic universal themes among immigrants yearning to make the United States their home.

As a child, I learned that performing ritual *mitzvot* (good deeds) is a means of *tikkun olam* (helping to repair the world). I also was taught that acts of '*tzedakah*' generate a more just world. I was also taught that Jews have an obligation to "Welcome the Stranger." an act mentioned 36 times in our Torah - the compilation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible.

Whether documented or not, families deserve to experience the beacon of light that serves as the foundation of this country's values. For those who are undocumented, living in fear of enforcement are discouraged from cooperating with law enforcement; their children learn to fear the police; public safety is hampered; and when there are injuries or illnesses, undocumented immigrants avoid health care services warranted. We cannot ignore the physical, emotional and educational trauma immigrant children face when ICE carries out raids in childcare facilities, schools, or hospitals. Children simply do not develop as adults that have a sense of safety and security.

Before and just after his inauguration, President Trump announced that it would be a priority that ICE detain criminals during raids. Just a month in office, it has become clear that limiting the raids to criminals is not the Administration's plan. The Protecting Sensitive Locations Acts establishes very clear guidelines that are needed to protect from these situations.

In 1993, federal policy and directives were created to limit immigration enforcement activities in sensitive locations. Since 1997 the City of Greenbelt has honored a community pledge establishing the city's commitment to its diverse population and rejecting attempts at division and acts of bigotry. On February 10, 2025, the City Council reaffirmed its commitment to ensure that Greenbelt is a respectful and welcoming community, but now now those commitments are threatened.

SB#828 establishes clear guidelines restricting ICE access to sensitive locations, including schools, courthouses, hospitals, places of worship, and other vital spaces. Therefore, I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#828.