



SUPPORT: Senate Bill 828
Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations
Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)
Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee
March 4, 2025

Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS) writes **in strong support of Senate Bill 828**, Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

AEMS is a statewide nonprofit, committed to ensuring that all students in the state of Maryland have access to high quality arts education. **We envision a public education system** in Maryland that supports, cultivates, **nurtures, and uplifts ALL students' creativity** through a robust arts education experience so that they can thrive in a healthy society. We regularly engage with arts educators around the state to learn about their successes and challenges as well as support them through professional development opportunities.

Students and teachers who are part of **immigrant families are critical to the fabric of our arts and school communities**. These community members are dancers, musicians, artists, and actors who both enrich and are enriched by the arts in their school communities. As artists, we know the transformative power of multiple perspectives and collaboration; we must band together to protect all of our young artists so they can continue to learn through and contribute to the arts experiences that are so essential to our human experience.

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.

Through our network of educators, we have learned about **students not showing up for auditions and out of school time arts activities** for fear of immigration enforcement, regardless of the legality of their immigration status. This poses real **risks to the safety of our students** and to all students' ability to learn and work together in an ensemble; **when even one person is missing, everyone feels that loss**.

AEMS 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.

AEMS urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rachel McGrain

Executive Director

Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS)

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