

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

SB828 IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT -SENSITIVE LOCATIONS -GUIDELINES AND POLICIES (PROTECTING SENSITIVE LOCATIONS ACT)

POSITION: FAVORABLE

My name is Loreen Heinz. I am a resident of District 12a. I am submitting testimony in favor of the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act. I am speaking for myself and not representing any organization.

I was born in Cleveland, Ohio, lived there and in North Carolina before moving to Maryland 55 years ago. I was raised in a large extended family and went to public schools. Through example, all of us were taught to respect each other and those around us, to “Love thy neighbor as thyself”. As an adult, I also try to follow the tenet of many religions and traditions— to follow the Golden Rule “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

Professionally, I was an English teacher. In North Carolina I was on the staff of the first junior high school to integrate in Durham County. In Howard County high schools, I worked closely with the Black Student Achievement Program staff in one school; in another my room was one of a few designated as a safe place for LGBTQ students; in my assignment as an English Language Development teacher, our room was a refuge for Muslim students worried about personal safety after the 9/11 attacks. In all schools I worked hard to make sure marginalized students were safe and felt cared about; otherwise, how could they learn and thrive? In private life, I support many organizations, national and local, that work for civil and human rights—including decades long memberships in both The Southern Poverty Law Center in Alabama and Friends of Latin America, founded in Howard County.

The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act will put into policy the basic tenets I learned to live by in Ohio. Undocumented immigrants are a part of our communities. They work, learn, play and pray among us. They contribute to our society both culturally and financially. It is unconscionable that ICE chooses to deport them using methods designed to induce trauma which affects not only them but all of us. I cannot imagine the immediate and long term distress of the whole community if a student or parent was taken away from the school or school grounds by government agents, or if the same happened during a religious service, in a work place or health care center. Not being documented is a civil offense, not a criminal one, and should be enforced in civil proceedings. Arresting undocumented people using the same harsh tactics as those being used to arrest people accused of violent crimes has no place in our state. Also, even using the term *criminal* to describe all undocumented people is a misnomer —language counts.

Respectfully, we should not govern by trauma and violence. I urge you to put yourselves in the shoes of the immigrants in our midst and vote in favor of this bill for their safety and ours.

Thank you.

Loreen Heinz  
Columbia MD 21044