

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0828

SB0828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

March 4, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to show **strong support** of **SB0828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**.

I provide testimony here as an individual who is active in Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) and on the Mission Team at Ark and Dove Presbyterian Church in Odenton. As part of SURJ and in collaboration with immigration organizations, I worked as a volunteer vetting prospective sponsors for asylum seekers during Trump's first administration, when children were being cruelly separated from their parents. SURJ Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Chapter has CASA as an accountability partner. A few years ago I participated with others in Anne Arundel County to get rid of 287g and the IGSA with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

I was stunned when Trump 2.0 signed an Executive Order that would allow ICE to enter Houses of Worship. This is in violation of Article 1 of the Constitution. **My faith calls me to welcome the immigrant and the stranger. At the very least a welcoming place must be a safe place, free from harassment and danger.** In the 1980's I supported a church in Illinois that was providing sanctuary. Bishop Desmond Tutu came and spoke to us about the Christian values and mission of providing safety within churches. It is a practice that has been honored for thousands of years. And it must continue.

For over a decade, federal policy limited 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.

I see the fear in the eyes of people I know. And I wonder how Americans could become so cruel. Unless you are Native American or your ancestors were enslaved, you descend from immigrants who came to this country for a better life. I'm sure they worked hard and made a way, often out of no way. Do you see how hard today's immigrants are working repairing our streets, serving in our restaurants, cleaning our homes and buildings?

Everyone should access essential services without fear of detention or separation. Public safety improves when immigrants feel safe reporting crimes and seeking help. Clear enforcement boundaries build trust, strengthening communities and institutions. For these reasons, **I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 1006.**

Thank you for your consideration.

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