

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 28, 2025

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

I am writing to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act). I am a resident of Mount Rainier.

I have lived in Mount Rainier since 1980 and have enjoyed the diversity of the neighborhood and the support for immigrants through our becoming a sanctuary city. My children went to Thomas Stone Elementary and I worked at Prince George's County Hospital for 20 years. Today I worry for the parents walking their children to Thomas Stone and patients seeking care at the H health department, clinics and hospitals. 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.

The impact of this shift in policy has meant that some children are staying home out of fear of ICE coming into the school. My neighbor who is a school bus driver knows children who are no longer riding the bus. A friend of ours from Venezuela is keeping her child at home for now. Will families be afraid to get vaccinations at the health department or seek medical care? Even before this policy shift I saw patients who waited too long before coming to the hospital with advanced kidney disease and cancer. I know that some of our residents were not willing to apply for rental assistance during COVID-19 because they already did not trust the government. Certainly this is more prevalent now.

Many of my immigrant neighbors are performing essential jobs in Mount Rainier. Some are nannies and reliable babysitters. Others work as landscapers and mechanics. Construction and home repair services are already harder to schedule as workers step back to avoid contact with ICE. Everyone should be able to work, to attend school, and to access essential services without fear of detention or separation.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828.

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