

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828
SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and
Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

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TO: Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee

FR: Susan Allen, District 30A

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Jews United for Justice (JUFJ) and Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT) are pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828- Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

I have visited many neighborhoods in Annapolis where families live who have recently arrived in Maryland and have started businesses and renovated run-down houses. These communities are along Forest Drive extension—many of you drive this road to reach the Capital—and in Eastport near my church. Some members of the family are citizens and some are undocumented. These new arrivals have started essential construction and landscaping businesses and have completely renovated run-down houses in their neighborhoods. Local businesses routinely hireworkers in the Forest Drive area. Without these workers, these small business owners cannot deliver services.

As you consider this Sensitive Locations bill, remember that the workers who died on the Key Bridge were undocumented immigrants. They gave their lives doing work that long-term residents of MD did not want to do.

Finally, I am personally afraid that my church and affiliate churches in downtown Annapolis will be entered by Federal Agents. Some of these churches would be targets because they symbolize our history

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.

JUFJ and ACT stand 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.

JUFJ and ACT urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828/HB 1006.

Respectfully, Susan Allen