

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828/HB 1006
SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and
Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 28, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

I, Katusca Cabeza, am pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828/HB 1006 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

I am an immigrant and sub-director of youth at my local church. Since I arrived in this country, I have worked hard to do everything legally and build a life with stability and security. But recently, with the new administration, I have felt much uncertainty. Programs for protection and legal support that provide peace of mind to those who follow the rules and seek stability here have been eliminated.

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.

I remember that in the first days after these changes, I felt afraid to go to the hospital. Not because I had done anything wrong, but because the news is often unclear and only manages to confuse and create more fear. And even though my status hadn't changed, even though everything was fine with me, I couldn't help but wonder if, in some way, I was at risk. Even going to church, where I have always felt at peace, became a dilemma. I would sit in the temple, trying to focus on the message, but in the back of my mind was the feeling that I might be exposed. There were many immigrants around me, and although everything seemed normal, I couldn't stop thinking: "What if the police suddenly show up?" I shouldn't feel fear in a place like that. No one should!

That is why I support the approval of the Sensitive Locations Protection Act. Schools, hospitals, courthouses, and churches should be safe spaces for everyone. It is not fair to live with the fear that these places could become zones of persecution when they should be

refuges of help, justice, and hope.

I 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.

I urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828/HB 1006.