

COLUMBIA DEMOCRATIC CLUB

REQUESTS FAVORABLE REPORT ON MARYLAND SENATE BILL 828

Protecting Sensitive Locations Act

February 19, 2025

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

The Columbia Democratic Club submits this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 828 (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act), introduced by Chair Smith. This bill is a critical measure to ensure that essential community spaces remain safe and accessible to all Maryland residents, regardless of their immigration status.

SB828 protects vulnerable individuals by limiting immigration enforcement at sensitive locations such as schools, hospitals, places of worship, and social service centers. These sites are vital for education, healthcare, and community support for all Marylanders. Fear of enforcement actions in such spaces often deters individuals from seeking critical services, endangering public health and safety.

The bill also upholds accountability by requiring state agencies to align with guidelines set by the Attorney General or provide transparency if they choose not to comply. This balance between safety and transparency fosters public trust in state institutions.

As an emergency measure, SB828 reflects the urgency of protecting public welfare and preserving community cohesion. It ensures that every resident, especially children, the elderly, and survivors of violence, can access essential services without fear.

I urge the committee to support Senate Bill 828 and advance it for swift passage to promote safety, dignity, and trust within our communities.

Respectfully,

John Handley, on behalf of Columbia Democratic Club

