

Bill: SB 828/HB 1006 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

Position: Support (FAV)

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Tatiana Quintanilla, MCPS teacher

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

Tatiana Quintanilla, an elementary school teacher for Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) in Maryland, I 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).

As an elementary school teacher in MCPS, I witnessed firsthand the fear and anxiety that my immigrant students and their families experience every day. One example I can think of is a moment of fear that arose within the community when police reinforcements were out in the community, the calls ringing from all the neighbors warning to be careful, and warning each other to not go out alone. Additionally, living in the same community that I teach in has made me realize how normalized I have made it to always be on alert. As a student, I was worried for loved ones nearby and as an adult, I am worried for my students and their families.

This issue matters to me as I was born and raised in Montgomery County, before I even knew what legalization meant. I at least knew school was a safe space, the church was a safe space, and at the hospital, I could be safe when sick. Now, no child should have to feel anxiety, stress about whether they will get access to free public education without separation and or removal from the country that has raised them. No child should wonder if their loved ones will be handcuffed and removed for trying to seek medical attention.

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees citizenship to all people born or naturalized in the United States and protects citizens from *discrimination and arbitrary government action*. I believe ICE entering public spaces is discriminatory, how are they deciding which house of worship to enter, which schools, and what 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.

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.

The SB 828 bill is not just about policy—it's about ensuring that the most vulnerable members of our communities can live without fear in spaces meant to support all. We should not be able to segregate public spaces using Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

As a teacher and a member of the community, I stand with immigrant communities and support 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, Tatiana Quintanilla, urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 828/HB 1006.