



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 828 – Immigration Enforcement –
Sensitive Locations – Guidelines and Policies
(Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)
Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 4, 2025**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) serves as the public affairs and community relations arm of the Jewish community. We represent over 100 Jewish agencies, synagogues, and schools throughout the region. The JCRC is strongly committed to cultivating a society based on justice, tolerance, and equity. We advocate on behalf of our social service agencies, which serve the most vulnerable on a non-sectarian basis. We also campaign for important policy interests on behalf of the Jewish community and all Marylanders.

The JCRC supports Senate Bill 828, the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act, which requires the Attorney General to establish guidelines for immigration enforcement including the protection of houses of worship from immigration raids. Our synagogues must remain safe and welcoming to all and our First Amendment right to religious liberty must be protected regardless of immigration status. SB 828 gets to the heart of Jewish law and tradition, which commands us 36 times in the Torah to welcome the stranger and help those in need as we know what it feels like to be a newcomer and surrounded by people who are hostile.

For more than a decade, federal policy has limited Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from entering sensitive locations including places of worship and we will not stand idly by as new policies threaten immigrants and instill fear inside houses of worship. The JCRC's long-standing immigration policy resolution opposes state and local legislation that would direct local law enforcement agencies to seek out undocumented immigrants and to detain them for deportation by federal authorities. In Montgomery County we have been leaders in advocating for the immigrant community and we will continue to do so.

During times of uncertainty and instability, people often turn to their religious institutions for comfort and care. Our synagogues have worked closely with other interfaith leaders to help settle refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, and along with our wonderful partner, Identity, we've helped newcomers from the southern border. The JCRC is committed to ensuring that everyone can practice their religion freely and Maryland remains an inclusive, compassionate and welcoming community to immigrants during this period of instability and fear. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report for Senate Bill 828.

