

February 28, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for SB 828 – Protecting Sensitive Locations Act

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

On behalf of Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 828, the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act. This bill is about dignity, safety, and ensuring that every Marylander, regardless of immigration status, can access essential services without fear. No one should have to think twice before taking their child to school, seeking medical care, attending a place of worship, or stepping into a courthouse to seek justice. Yet, for many in our community, that fear is real. It keeps parents from enrolling their children in school, patients from visiting a doctor, and survivors of violence from reporting abuse. This is not who we are as a state.

By requiring the Attorney General to establish clear guidelines restricting immigration enforcement in schools, healthcare facilities, places of worship, public assistance offices, and courthouses, this bill provides the certainty and protection our communities desperately need. It empowers local agencies to adopt these policies, ensuring that vital institutions remain places of trust, not fear. The impact of this cannot be overstated—when people feel safe seeking medical care, our entire healthcare system benefits. When students can attend school without fear of separation from their families, they thrive. When survivors of violence can seek justice without hesitation, our communities become safer.

For Maryland's Latino and immigrant populations, this bill offers more than just legal protections; it provides peace of mind. We have heard too many stories of individuals skipping doctor's appointments, missing school events, or enduring abuse in silence because they feared encountering immigration enforcement. This is a reality we must change. At MLU, we work every day to dismantle these barriers—through advocacy, education, and direct outreach—but real change requires legislative action. SB 828 is that action.

We will not only support its passage but also work to ensure its success. Through community partnerships, outreach initiatives, and continued advocacy, we will educate our communities about their rights and the protections this bill provides. We will stand alongside our partners in schools, healthcare centers, and legal aid organizations to make sure that fear is replaced with trust, that uncertainty is replaced with clarity, and that all Marylanders—regardless of where they were born—are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to stand with us and issue a favorable report on SB 828. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
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