

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 0828**  
SB 0828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and  
Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

February 28, 2025

SB: Dear Honorable Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

I am pleased to offer a **favorable testimony in strong support of SB 0828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)**.

My name is Elva Joya and I am a first-generation Salvadoran-American. I work for an oncology and hematology clinic that serves a diverse community of people who are affected by cancer and hematology concerns. Its mission is to provide the most advanced cancer care available anywhere in an atmosphere of caring compassion.

Among all of the patients who we serve, we have a population of undocumented patients who receive care by our providers. Some of these patients are self-pay and some of them are a part of the Maryland Breast and Cervical Cancer program. Our undocumented patients should not have to fear coming to the clinic to receive their chemotherapy or hydration treatment to keep them alive because they fear that they will be questioned of their immigration status and be potentially detained if they do not know their rights.

As a daughter of immigrants, this bill particularly interests me because while my parents have taken the steps to be legally protected now, I cannot imagine the stress and torment that mixed status families are experiencing now more than ever, especially in spaces that are supposed to feel safe. No child should have to worry about going to school and fearing that either they will not make it home or that they will not find their parents when they get home. No person should fear seeking medical care or practicing their faith for the same reason.

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 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 0828.**