

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 828 – Immigration Enforcement- Sensitive Locations-Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee February 19, 2025

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

Dr. Alice Weisko, Psy.D. is pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 828 -Immigration Enforcement- Sensitive Locations-Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).

As a psychologist for nearly 40 years I can attest to the trauma and scarring that will arise from ICE agents entering a school to remove a child. It is likely the child or children will resist. The targets as well as friends and classmates who witnessing the struggle, or even a terror-frozen submission, will carry the effects of the trauma for the rest of their lives. A powerful anxiety state will ensue. The sense of safety and trust in their school will be shattered. School will become a place of fear, imbued with the fear of being abruptly ripped away from everything familiar, most especially from their parents. The US Government will be viewed as a malevolent, violent force and teachers and administrators will be seen as impotent to protect them. This is a generation asked to trust teachers with information about peers' plans to self-harm or hurt others. After witnessing an ICE raid they will be far less likely to trust anyone in school again. The captured child's terror will follow them for years. It will be difficult for them to trust anyone and to focus in a classroom. Their and their classmates' anxiety will interfere with concentration. Without concentration there will be no learning. Months of school will be disrupted for the everyone present. Anxiety will haunt the halls of education, damaging all. The students' trust in adults will be shattered. Please prevent this prolonged damage from trauma by barring ICE agents from Maryland schools and their vicinity.

I urge the Committee to provide a positive report on SB828, the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.