

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1006

SB 828 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

Senate Judiciary Proceedings Committee

February 27, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

Senaya Asfaw is pleased to offer **a favorable testimony in strong support of HB 1006 - Immigration Enforcement - Sensitive Locations - Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act).**

My name is Senaya Asfaw, a junior at Montgomery Blair High School, and the current Networking and Membership Director of a student-led organization based in Montgomery County that fights for immigrant rights. The organization, Student Fans of Asylum and Immigration Reform fights for the residents of this county to feel safe, especially student immigrants present at schools across the county. My high school, Montgomery Blair, has a diverse population which includes immigrants or the children of immigrants, and my school must remain a safe zone for all students where law enforcement does not cause discomfort and fear among students.

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.

As a student, I have seen how increased immigration enforcement surrounding schools would cause discomfort and fear among my peers. Within the past month, students have been attesting to seeing ICE enforcement just outside the school or at the church just down the road. Immigrant students are now afraid to learn because ICE might come to their school, these are children who deserve to learn as every child has the right to an education, and as a community, we should embrace this. ICE's ability to enter sensitive locations would also force many immigrant residents to not seek proper healthcare or call the police in the case of an emergency.

Healthcare is a universal right that should not be threatened by immigration enforcement, and as a society, we need to protect every person who seeks healthcare and justice. This will allow children to be raised in a safe and empowering environment while ensuring every resident does not have to jeopardize their safety due to a fear of their family being taken.

Everyone should access essential services without fear of detention or separation. Public safety improves when immigrants feel safe reporting crimes and seeking help. Clear enforcement boundaries build trust, strengthening communities and institutions. For these reasons, I **urge the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 1006.**