

Bill Title: Protecting Sensitive Locations Act - HB1006 (SB828)
Position: SUPPORT (FAV)
To: Judiciary Committee
Date: February 27, 2025

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Erinn Camp Mansour with Quaker Voice of Maryland (QVM), a faith-based advocacy group that advocates for policies that are just, compassionate, equitable, and respectful of the inherent worth of every person and the Earth upon which we live. Quakers across Maryland shared with us their concern for immigrant protections. QVM sees HB1006 as an urgent priority in response to the recent rollback of the federal policy of protection for sensitive locations, like places of worship.

The Quaker experience of the Divine affects what we do in our personal lives, what we believe and how we work for changes in the wider world. "Testimonies" are what Quakers call the ways we have found to live and act based on our beliefs. We embrace the knowledge that all persons are children of the Divine and brothers and sisters of one another. **Our spiritual and social testimonies, including those of peace, community, integrity, and equality, lead us to submit this testimony for HB1006.** In addition, a coalition of Quaker Meetings filed suit in a Maryland federal court to block the change in federal policy that now allows federal immigrant enforcement officials to enter houses of worship for immigrant enforcement action. Then, on February 24, 2025, the U.S. District Court of Maryland issued an order blocking the Trump administration's policy that enables immigration officials to enter houses of worship indiscriminately. The order, which outlines the ways in which the Trump administration policy is likely to violate religious freedom and expression rights, applies to Plaintiffs' houses of worship. We need additional protections..

The filed suit in federal court affirms the importance of state-level advocacy in Maryland to support passing emergency legislation this Session. HB1006 directs the Attorney General to issue guidance limiting immigration enforcement access to schools, healthcare facilities, places of worship, social services providers, and other essential spaces, and for state agencies to develop policies that enforce that guidance. For decades, it has been both the policy and practice of our federal immigration enforcement agencies not to seek undocumented immigrants at these sensitive locations. However, now that these protections have been rescinded and a policy of mass deportation has been initiated, clear guidance is required at the state level.

This bill will reduce confusion and help prevent unlawful entry and removal of our friends and family, parents and children, and the sick and vulnerable from these places. Members of the public who visit these essential spaces should be free from intimidation, discriminatory treatment, and interference with their constitutional rights to religious liberty. No one should be afraid to go to school, seek medical attention, or practice their faith because they lack immigration documentation. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. We urge you to issue a FAVORABLE report for this important and emergency legislation.

Sincerely,

Erinn Camp Mansour

Working Group Member, on behalf of Quaker Voice of Maryland

Organization email: quakervoicecmd@gmail.com