



February 24, 2025

## Testimony Regarding House Bill 1006 - Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations – Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

The Montgomery County [Children's Opportunity Alliance](https://www.mocochildren.org) is a locally legislated Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity that brings community together to create a more equitable, accessible, high-quality, and sustainable early childhood system that narrows disparities and puts young children on a path to reach their greatest potential.

**We urge you to support HB1006 – Protecting Sensitive Locations Act** – this legislation is critical to ensuring that all Maryland residents, regardless of immigration status, can access essential services at schools, medical facilities, places of worship, and other sensitive locations without fear of enforcement actions. By establishing clear guidelines, we can protect the well-being and trust of our communities, ensuring that sensitive locations remain safe and accessible to everyone.

For Maryland to be a place where all individuals can thrive, we must ensure that every person feels safe when seeking education, medical care, legal assistance, or community support. Fear of immigration enforcement at these critical locations prevents families from enrolling their children in school, seeking necessary medical treatment, reporting crimes, or practicing their faith freely.

Without clear guidelines, the mere presence of immigration enforcement near schools or hospitals can have a chilling effect on families, causing them to avoid these vital institutions altogether. This is particularly a concern for child care centers, given that the better attendance a child has, the stronger the educational and development outcomes for the child and the more stability for parents' employment. This, in turn, harms not only immigrant communities but also the broader public by reducing trust in public institutions and weakening community safety and public health.

### **Protecting Sensitive Locations Act will:**

- **Ensure safe access to essential services** – Families will no longer have to choose between their safety and their health, education, or legal rights.
- **Strengthen public trust** – Clear guidelines will help reinforce trust between communities and public institutions, encouraging all residents to seek the services they need without hesitation.
- **Uphold Maryland's commitment to equity and inclusion** – This bill sends a strong message that Maryland is a state that values the dignity and well-being of all its residents.

Submitted on behalf of the Children's Opportunity Alliance.



Kimberly Pena-Molina, Early Care and Education Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kimberly Pena-Molina".

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