

Tuesday, February 25, 2025



Showing Up for Racial Justice

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this testimony as a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore, a group of individuals working to mobilize white people in a multi-racial movement for equity and racial justice in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Howard County. We are also working in collaboration with CASA de Maryland, an immigration advocacy and assistance organization based in Maryland. I am a resident of Baltimore City and District 41. **I am testifying in support of HB1006 — Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.**

The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act in Maryland aims to safeguard areas like schools, hospitals, and places of worship from immigration enforcement actions by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In 2011, the Department of Homeland Security issued a memorandum limiting ICE's authority to conduct enforcement actions in and near locations such as schools, doctors' offices, and institutions of worship. In 2021, a Biden Administration policy expanded the list of protected areas to include playgrounds, disaster relief locations, social services sites, and other sensitive locations. These protections were designed to ensure that immigrants could access essential services without fear of deportation.

On the first full day of his new term, President Trump engaged in racist, xenophobic grandstanding by heartlessly eliminating these safeguards and authorizing ICE enforcement activity in all previously protected areas. Trump's unilateral action aims to terrorize our communities by stripping people of fundamental liberties and critical services, effectively blocking individuals' access to life-saving medical support, the exercise of religious freedom, the right to a public education, and the ability to safely participate in everyday life.

In addition to reversing well-established ICE enforcement guidelines, Trump's action **violates the protections that the Constitution guarantees to all people in the United States, regardless of their immigration status.**

Throughout Maryland, the Trump Administration's immigration policies are having immediate, critical, and devastating effects. Individuals and families are being forced to make exceptionally difficult choices between protecting themselves from the potential tragedy of deportation and accessing necessary care and services. In schools, empty desks speak to the fear that families feel when deciding how to keep their children safe. Under the new guidelines, individuals may not feel secure seeking critical medical care, putting their health at risk and impacting the overall health of our communities.

HB1006 would strengthen Maryland's commitment to protecting the institutions, service sites, and sacred spaces that keep our communities safe, healthy, and thriving. This bill would push back against policies that are designed to divide us, fracture our sense of community, and sow fear and distrust.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of HB1006 — Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.**

Thank you for your time, service, and consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Katherine Blaha
5706 Cross Country Blvd
Baltimore, MD 21209
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Baltimore