

February 27, 2025

Julie Simon

Testimony on HB1006/SB828 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations – Guidelines and Policies (Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1006/SB828.

Going back to the story of Abraham, Jews have been called upon to welcome and care for the stranger, or immigrant. Beginning three years ago, I have served as the team lead for a Welcome Circle created at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation to welcome an Afghan family to Cockeysville. Today, more than 30 Afghan families live there. Many of these refugees were forced to leave Afghanistan after years of serving with and supporting United States efforts in that country. Many left behind family and colleagues. Regardless of their immigration status, none of the families who have arrived safely here should live in fear of immigration raids when they seek vital services at sensitive places such as schools, medical facilities, religious institutions or social service agencies.

Over the past few years we have celebrated Jewish and Muslim religious holidays and special occasions with our Afghan friends, welcoming them to Baltimore. Religious organizations, like Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, must be free to exercise our First Amendment rights to welcome everyone into our worship spaces, without regard to immigration status. We need to continue to make Maryland a safe and welcoming space for new Americans, which is also why I support HB1006/SB828 and I urge you to support it too.

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