

The Honorable Martin LaLonde, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

March 24, 2026

Re: S209 Bill

Dear Chair Martin LaLonde,

I am writing to express my strong support for S209 "An Act Relating to Prohibiting Civil Arrest in Sensitive Locations," which would add government buildings, schools, shelters, and health care facilities to the list of protected spaces where individuals are not subject to civil arrest. This bill also appropriately extends protection to those traveling to, entering, remaining at, or returning from these locations, unless there is a judicial warrant.

In my role as Director of the Pediatric New American Program and as a Pediatrician in Burlington, I am deeply committed to the health, safety, and dignity of the immigrant families we serve. This legislation upholds the principles of the Fourth Amendment by ensuring that individuals are protected from unreasonable seizures in spaces that are essential to daily life and well-being.

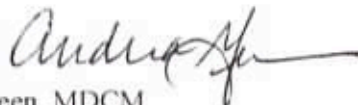
Equally important, this bill ensures that people can seek medical care, both urgent and preventive, without fear. Patients should never have to weigh the risk of arrest against their health or the health of their children. Unfortunately, I have seen firsthand how fear related to immigration status leads to dangerous delays in care. In one instance in 2025, a teenager in our community, but originally from Latin America, delayed seeking medical attention for months despite worsening symptoms. By the time he presented for care he was vomiting blood and unable to eat due to severe abdominal pain; he was diagnosed with end-stage cancer. The delay in seeking care meant that treatment was no longer an option, and only palliative care could be provided. This tragic outcome underscores the very real consequences of fear-driven avoidance of healthcare.

Healthcare providers are often the first to witness the cascading effects when individuals avoid care. Delayed or foregone preventive services can result in poorly managed chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, untreated injuries, and the spread of infectious diseases. These outcomes not only harm individuals and families but also place additional strain on our healthcare system through increased emergency department visits and preventable hospitalizations.

By protecting sensitive locations, this bill fosters safer, healthier communities and reinforces trust in essential institutions. It ensures that individuals can access education, shelter, government services, and healthcare without intimidation or fear.

I strongly urge you to support this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Andrea E. Green, MDCM
Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Member of Vermont Medical Society