



**S.209 - An act relating to prohibiting civil arrest in sensitive locations**

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak on S.209. We appreciate the committee's consideration of the bill and would request the addition of social services establishments, like domestic and sexual violence organizations, to the list of sensitive locations.

The Department of Homeland Security had long-standing guidance that Immigrant and Customs Enforcement refrain from enforcement actions in sensitive locations. In 2021, social services establishments were added to that list. This guidance was rescinded in 2025 and resulted in concern and a lack of clarity for providers, including for domestic and sexual violence organizations.

Domestic and sexual violence organizations provide life-saving services: shelter, legal support, safety planning, and more. This work is highly sensitive and often occurs during the most dangerous periods of a survivor's life. When a survivor seeks support, it is an act of trust—trust that reaching out will make them safer than remaining with an abusive partner or in an unsafe home.

Survivors already face many barriers to seeking safety. Survivors, regardless of their actual or perceived immigration status, should not face an added barrier of fear that accessing support could expose themselves or their families to enforcement actions.

Nine of our fourteen member programs provide community-based shelter. Even among those, many have offices that are not co-located with their community-based shelters, which are currently named in S.209. Services, like support groups, confidential 1-1 support, and free legal clinics, are often provided in office-based settings.

Including social services establishments in the list of sensitive locations would offer clarity and consistency to survivors and the providers who serve them.

We are sharing relevant language previously included in Department of Homeland Security guidance, in case it is helpful reference for the committee:

- "A social services establishment, such as a crisis center, domestic violence shelter, victims services center, child advocacy center, supervised visitation center, family justice center, community-based organization, facility that serves disabled persons, homeless shelter, drug or alcohol counseling and treatment facility, or food bank or pantry or other establishment distributing food or other essentials of life to people in need."

We appreciate your committee's attention to this issue and would be happy to answer any questions.