

Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (HR 1815) Summary

This bill would codify limits on immigration enforcement actions at or near sensitive locations, and expand the definition of sensitive location.

In a 2011 memo, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) outlined its policy on enforcement actions occurring at “sensitive locations,” including—among others—schools, hospitals, and places of worship. That memo directed ICE officers to avoid arrests, interviews, searches, and surveillance at these locations unless certain exigent circumstances exist, such as an imminent danger to public safety. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) instituted a similar policy in 2013.

The **Protecting Sensitive Locations Act** would codify the Department of Homeland Security policy on sensitive locations and expand it to include: courthouses; additional health care, educational, and religious facilities; and other public spaces where the threat of immigration enforcement may deter individuals from seeking services or participating in their community.

The bill would also require DHS to provide training to officers and report to Congress on any enforcement activity occurring at sensitive locations. Additionally, it contains the same exception for exigent circumstances outlined in the DHS memos.

Sensitive Locations in the 2011 ICE Memo and 2013 CBP Memo:

- Schools (including pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, post-secondary schools up to and including colleges and universities, and vocational or trade schools);
- Hospitals;
- Churches, synagogues, mosques, or other institutions of worship, including buildings rented for the purpose of religious services;
- The site of a funeral, wedding, or other public religious ceremony;
- A site during the occurrence of a public demonstration, such as a march, rally or parade;
- Any organization that assists children, pregnant women, victims of crime or abuse, or individuals with significant mental or physical disabilities.

Additional Sensitive Locations in HR 1815:

- Any Federal, State, or local courthouse, including the office of an individual’s legal counsel or representative, and a probation office;
- Any medical treatment or health care facility, including any hospital, doctor’s office, accredited health clinic, or emergent or urgent care facility, or community health center;
- Any scholastic or education-related activity or event, including field trips and interscholastic events;
- Any school bus or school bus stop during periods when children are present on the bus or at the stop;
- Locations providing disaster relief or emergency social services and assistance, including, but not limited to, food banks and homeless shelters;
- Domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, supervised visitation centers, family justice centers, or victims services providers;
- Congressional district offices;
- Public assistance offices;
- Social Security offices;
- DMV offices.

The bill also allows for certain exceptions under the following exigent circumstances:

- The imminent risk of death, violence, or physical harm to any person, including a situation implicating terrorism or the national security of the United States in some other manner;
- The immediate arrest or pursuit of a dangerous felon, terrorist suspect, or other individual presenting an imminent danger or public safety risk;
- The imminent risk of destruction of evidence that is material to an ongoing criminal case.