



*A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care*

May 9, 2017

Sen. Richard Blumenthal  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC

Dear Sen. Blumenthal:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing to thank you for introducing S. 845, legislation to protect sensitive community locations including health care facilities from harmful immigration enforcement actions, and to urge your colleagues to support this bill.

CHA believes all persons should have equal access to health care, regardless of immigration status. In their 2003 pastoral letter on immigration *Strangers No Longer*, the Catholic bishops of the U.S. reaffirmed that regardless of their legal status, immigrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity which should be respected. While our ministry continues to stand by these principles in our commitment to care for all persons, it is an unfortunate reality that increased and overly aggressive immigration enforcement actions and the publicity surrounding them has caused a great deal of anxiety among the various immigrant communities. Immigrants have expressed growing concerns about accessing services in community locations out of fear of unwanted attention and harassment from enforcement officials. This is not only contrary to our mission as Catholic health providers, it is also detrimental to both the health of immigrants and their families and overall public health.

Your legislation would help to address this growing concern by codifying current guidelines and restrictions for federal officials engaged in enforcement actions in or near several “sensitive



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locations,” including hospitals, doctors’ offices, health clinics, alcohol or drug treatment centers, and emergent or urgent care facilities. We believe this is absolutely necessary to help clear up the current confusion over enforcement actions in these locations and provide greater clarity for our providers and health facility employees so that they can continue to offer services to all regardless of immigration status, without threats or fears of reprisal. We also commend the legislation’s inclusion within sensitive locations of buildings offering religious and social services to immigrants, where so many of our Catholic partners meet the needs of their communities.

Again, we thank you for introducing S. 845 and thank those who have co-sponsored it, and hope that all of your Senate colleagues will join with us and with them in supporting the bill. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rodgers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Michael Rodgers

Sr. Vice President, Advocacy and Public Policy