

**Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee**  
**House Bill 1513: Public Schools – School Security Personnel –**  
**Prohibition of Immigration Investigation and Enforcement Functions**

**\*\*Support\*\***

**March 11, 2025**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of the Social Work in Schools (SWIS) Committee of the National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter, we would like to express our support for House Bill 1513 - Public Schools – School Security Personnel – Prohibition of Immigration Investigation and Enforcement Functions.

The SWIS Committee includes school social workers serving in school systems throughout Maryland, working daily with students, their families, and school staff so that children and youth can maximize their learning. Often, when students are anxious, depressed, or otherwise unable to concentrate, they end up in our office.

Students learn best when they feel safe. In the current political climate, it is difficult for them when the sight of a badge or a uniform evokes the fear that they—or their siblings, parents, or friends-- may be abruptly deported. Without the reassurance that the security staff in their school will not assist in this outcome, they may hesitate to reach out to those individuals in situations of genuine risk to safety. Very young children may refuse to come to school at all, afraid of coming home to an empty house. Other students, not at risk of deportation themselves, are worried for their friends or that they may be questioned about their friends' status.

There are things that we, as school social workers, can do to attempt to mitigate these fears if we can assure students that their school resource officers, school police officers, and school security staff are prohibited from assisting in such activities. We can facilitate relationship building. We can coach strategies to manage worry. We can do our best to ensure that students feel safe and can focus on instruction to the best of their ability.

The action proposed by HB 1513 will not magically cause the anxiety of these students to disappear, but would be an important reassurance that parents, faith leaders, and school staff can provide for our students so that learning can occur. Because of this, we ask for a favorable report on this bill.

Respectfully,

Gail L. Martin, MSW; Legislative Committee Liaison, Social Work in Schools Committee  
NASW-MD