



House Bill 1513: Public Schools – School Security Personnel – Prohibition of Immigration Investigation and Enforcement Functions

Ways and Means Committee

Position: Support

March 11, 2025

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to ensure that the promises of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future are fully realized, creating a world-class public education system where all students feel safe, supported, and able to thrive. The students and families who have been promised this education and safe space, including immigrant communities, must be protected from enforcement activities that jeopardize their sense of security and access to education. **For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 1513, which would, if enacted, codify that school resource officers (SROs) and school security employees may not engage in federal immigration investigations or enforcement in public schools.**

Schools are one of the few protected social spaces for children, and any involvement of SROs or school security staff in immigration enforcement undermines that fundamental principle. Recent shifts in enforcement policies and priorities on the federal level have left sensitive locations like schools at risk of losing their protected status as well as immigrant students and families vulnerable.

The presence of immigration enforcement in and around schools has well-documented negative impacts on the safety, stability, and well being of students and the broader school community:

- Increased absenteeism: Families, fearing separation, withdraw their children from school or reduce attendance, disrupting education and often leads to significant negative impacts to academic outcomes.¹
- Psychological harm: Toxic stress associated with the pervasive threat of immigration enforcement affects brain development, and increases risk of depression, anxiety, PTSD, and severe psychological distress.²
- Disproportionate impact: These harms overwhelmingly affect Black and Brown students. Further, this enforcement promotes disengagement from essential social supports, limiting critical resources for families and weakening community trust.³

While the evidence of SROs improving school safety outcomes is limited, given the current reality of their role in many schools, it is essential to clearly define their responsibilities and ensure immigration enforcement is not part of their function.⁴

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future is built on the very foundation of active community engagement and accountability to governing systems to ensure that *all* students are equitably served, including and prioritizing supports and protections for immigrant communities. This commitment is interwoven into *every* pillar of the Blueprint. House Bill 1513 works to limit the powers of SROs and school security enforcement, protecting at-promise student populations and is a step toward codifying the protections necessary for our student populations. Without preserving

¹ [How Strict Immigration Enforcement Harms School Children](#)

² [American Immigration Council](#)

³ [Immigration Enforcement and US Schools: What Could Happen and What Education Leaders Can Do](#)

⁴ [The Thin Blue Line in Schools: New Evidence on School-Based Policing Across the U.S.](#)

these safeguards, the promises of the Blueprint will never be realized and real students and families will be harmed in the process.

Strong Schools Maryland urges the General Assembly to work with representative organizations such as CASA to ensure that the implementation of this proposed legislation protects immigrant students and families in an effective and equitable manner. Protections work when the people impacted are at the table.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on House Bill 1513.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.

The Coalition to Reform School Discipline (CRSD) signs on to this testimony.