



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

March 11th, 2025

HB1513

Public Schools - School Security Personnel - Prohibition of Immigration Investigation and Enforcement Functions

Ways and Means Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 1513**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

The Public Schools - School Security Personnel - Prohibition of Immigration Investigation and Enforcement Functions Act ensures that school resource officers and school security employees are not used for federal immigration investigation or enforcement purposes. This Act is designed to protect the educational environment, ensuring that students and families feel safe within schools, regardless of their immigration status. By separating school security from federal immigration enforcement, the Act prioritizes the well-being of students and promotes trust between school officials, law enforcement, and the communities they serve.

From a Catholic social teaching perspective, this Act aligns with the principles of human dignity, the common good, and solidarity. Schools must be places of learning, inclusion, and safety, not fear or intimidation. The Church upholds the rights of all individuals, particularly children, to access education without undue fear of deportation. When school security personnel participate in immigration enforcement, it can discourage families from sending their children to school, hinder educational access, and create an atmosphere of exclusion. This policy ensures that schools remain safe havens for all students, allowing them to focus on their growth, development, and learning.

At the community level, this legislation fosters trust between immigrant families and the education system. Many students in Maryland's schools come from diverse backgrounds, and some may belong to mixed-status families. If school security personnel were involved in immigration enforcement, it would erode trust, discourage parental engagement, and prevent students from fully participating in their education. This law helps ensure that all students, regardless of background, can thrive in a supportive and secure school environment.

From a policy standpoint, the Act maintains the integrity of school security by ensuring that resource officers focus solely on student safety rather than federal immigration enforcement. The role of school security personnel should be to protect students from harm, prevent violence,

and foster a secure learning environment, not to act as immigration agents. By implementing this prohibition, the law reinforces the idea that schools are places of education and empowerment, not immigration enforcement zones. This approach aligns with the Catholic commitment to social justice, the protection of vulnerable populations, and the promotion of a just and compassionate society.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 1513**.