
**Testimony in Support of House Bill 403
Immigration Enforcement - Public Schools, Hospitals, and Courthouses - Policies**

**House Judiciary Committee
February 11, 2020
1:00 p.m.**

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Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 403 as a matter of social justice, school safety, and respect for all Maryland students and families. This safe harbor legislation will help to make sure that school buildings are places for learning and not for immigration enforcement actions.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

As it specifically relates to schools, this legislation is likely to lead local boards of education to codify what is already existing in regulations – a prohibition on Immigration and Custom Enforcement agents from coming on school property to enforce an immigration action. Importantly, the legislation does not alter the criminal justice system from running its normal course.

Schools deserve to be safe havens for students and their families. Passing House Bill 403 ensures that students can learn, no matter their immigration status, without fear and that educators will not be caught in the middle of an immigration enforcement action. This same peace of mind is needed for families as well, especially to support parental involvement that we know makes a huge difference in the academic outcomes for students. Additionally, we want to remove the fear of deportation in a school setting, and the stress and anxiety that it can cause, so students can instead focus on attending class, participating in lessons, and maximizing their academic performance.

This legislation will allow our schools to serve their mission of meeting the education and support needs of all students and families – every single one who walks through the school building doors seeking new knowledge and opportunities.

Protecting students and schools is a foremost priority for the educators in the state of Maryland.
MSEA urges a favorable report on House Bill 403.