

HB 1006
Immigration Enforcement – Sensitive Locations – Guidelines and Policies
(Protecting Sensitive Locations Act)
House Judiciary Committee
February 27, 2025

SUPPORT

HB 1006 directs the Attorney General to issue guidance about limiting immigration enforcement in “sensitive locations” in compliance with federal and state laws.

The Maryland Food Bank estimates that 1 in 3 Marylanders are at risk of food insecurity. A person who is food insecure does not have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food on any given day, and this problem persists in every area of the state. There are also communities and populations who are disproportionately affected by food insecurity, including families with children, older adults, and communities of color. Immigrant families that are facing food insecurity are also burdened by unique challenges, such as the availability of foods that are culturally familiar. The causes of food insecurity are complex and often include factors such as financial hardship and low income.

HB 1006 explicitly lists food banks as a “sensitive location,” along with partners and places in which we provide food assistance including food pantries, homeless shelters, schools, health clinics, after-school care centers and recreation centers, emergency food distributions, and community-based organizations. The importance of these locations being considered “safe” for all persons – but for HB 1006, families that consist of neighbors with varying levels of citizenship status – cannot be overstated. The physical, mental, and emotional safety of neighbors visiting their local food pantries, attending a food distribution, or benefitting from their school pantry for example are additional layers that stress the importance of ensuring that our network of partners is dignified and open for all. The Maryland Food Bank believes that food is a basic human right, and access to food resources is absolutely necessary; fear cannot and should not be a barrier to that right.

The Maryland Food Bank has open lines of communication with our almost 800 partners all across the state to determine the impacts of assumed and planned increases to immigration enforcement throughout the communities we serve. We anticipate that our partners may see a *decrease* in food distribution due to deportation fears. Our additional concern is that we have partners that know of families who come regularly and may have suddenly stopped – yet their need for food assistance has not subsided. The state’s ability to provide tangible and implementable guidance to these partners – the breadth of which are listed above – can only benefit our joint efforts and shared goal of feeding Marylanders who are affected by hunger.

For these reasons, the Maryland Food Bank appreciates the Committee’s consideration and respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1006.

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