



Maryland Youth Advisory Council
c/o Governor's Office Children
45 Calvert Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Graham Snyder, *Chair*
Joyce Yun, *Vice Chair*
Qamryn Askew, *Legislative Chair*

02, 23, 2026

Re: SB0810 | Public Schools - School Security Personnel - Immigration Investigation and Enforcement

Chair Feldman and members of the EEE Committee,

My name is Jefferson Vasquez-Reyes, and I am here in my capacity as a 2nd-year member of the Maryland Youth Advisory Council, which was established by law in 2008 (Chapter 559, Acts of 2008). The Council keeps the Governor and the General Assembly apprised of issues which are important to youth in the State. Annually, the Council also formulates a legislative proposal and conducts public hearings on issues of concern to more than 1.9 million Maryland youth. In 2016, the council's charge was expanded to include local government.

Fear of immigration enforcement has increased in our nation. 4 in 10 immigrants fear that they or their family members may be detained or deported¹. In addition, 50% of lawfully present immigrants have reported increased anxiety². Imagine how this may impact our state's youth. Instead of worrying about which universities they want to attend, what they'll do for recess tomorrow, or what AP courses to take soon, many of them wonder whether showing up for school is worth it, or whether they'll see their families at the end of the school day. Schools are seen as safe environments for students, bolstered by the presence of security or school resource officers (SROs). However, this trust is shattered when personnel are used to compromise students' on-campus safety. A case we can reflect on is that of Liam Ramos. A five-year-old child was detained by ICE agents after being used to detain his father. The press captured a photo of Liam being put into a vehicle, with a facial expression of fear. Not only did this impact Liam, but it also affected his peers, too. Many of them began writing letters to ICE, revealing their fear and concern about their classmates' arrest³.

¹ Vani Sangneria. (2025, November 19). *Survey: Immigrant parents avoid school, work due to deportation concerns*. EdSource.

<https://edsource.org/updates/survey-immigrant-parents-avoid-school-work-due-to-deportation-concerns>
² kffisabelle. (2025, November 18). *KFF/New York Times 2025 Survey of Immigrants: Worries and Experiences Amid Increased Immigration Enforcement* | KFF. KFF.

[https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/kff-new-york-times-2025-survey-affected Liam](https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/kff-new-york-times-2025-survey-affected-Liam), but it also affected his peers
fearful
expressionf-immigrants-worries-and-experiences-amid-increased-immigration-enforcement/

³ New York Times Opinion. (2026, January 31). *ICE Took Their Classmate. They Started Writing Letters*. YouTube; The New York Times. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cw36_u3_7k



Liam Ramos, detained by ICE (2025)

It shouldn't be this way. I implore you all to support this bill. Even though I attended a different school system growing up (DCPS), I still know one thing to be true: my school security personnel were trusted figures and mentors to me. I saw how they encouraged my peers to excel academically and make better choices. Allowing school security to engage with ICE operations will not only thwart the trust students have in their security but also create tension and unrest in our public schools, potentially disrupting learning environments. Data already shows that the percentage of students who feel understood has decreased since the pandemic, from 43% in 2020 to 22% in 2022⁴. I ask that you make a decision today that does not worsen this existing issue but instead increases students' confidence in their school's staff and in your roles as legislators.

Jefferson Vasquez-Reyes
Co-Chair, Community Initiative Committee
2nd Year Member

⁴ YouthTruth. (2023, April). *Students Weigh In, Part IV: Learning & Well-Being After Covid-19*. YouthTruth Survey; The Center for Effective Philanthropy. <https://youthtruth.org/resources/students-weigh-in-part-i-learning-well-being-during-covid-19/>