



Testimony for the House Judiciary Committee

Senate Bill 810: Public Schools - School Security Personnel - Immigration Investigation and Enforcement

April 1, 2026

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

The ACLU of Maryland supports SB 810 with amendments. This legislation seeks to expand Maryland's current "Sensitive Locations" statute, as codified by SB 828 passed in 2025, and directs the Attorney General of Maryland to update guidance to affected government entities¹. We submitted testimony on the original bill on March 4, 2026, in the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.²

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The committee should amend the language in HB 1341 pertaining to courthouses into SB810.

It is critical that both undocumented residents and citizens receive their right to due process in court, without threat or disruption of federal immigration enforcement. Under this bill, Maryland's Attorney General would be required to update the guidance for courthouses, public schools, public libraries, and any entity of state or local government labeled as a sensitive location by October 1, 2026. Each entity would be responsible for updating and implementing a policy consistent with the guidance.

The committee must adopt amendments drafted by We Are CASA to ensure greater clarity on the definition of school property and a shelter-in-place protocol.

Creation of "School Zones"

In addition to ensuring that school personnel have clear policies for interacting with immigration enforcement, We Are CASA's amendments would define all school property and areas under the control of the district as "school zones", which includes the school building and its grounds, as well as athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, buses and bus stops, and other spaces used by the school. The amendments would require that school officials to notify principals of any known or anticipated immigration enforcement activity near schools. This measure will help prevent school disruption, the erosion of trust, and exposure of children to traumatic events.

Shelter-In Place Protocol

Another amendment also seeks to allow principals to initiate a shelter-in-place protocol, which involves moving children into a secure and locked room where school staff can account for students to maintain safety. Shelter-in-place protocols already exist in school districts throughout the state to protect children during a threat such as a hazardous waste spill, a police-related emergency, or extreme weather conditions. Several school districts around the country have started implementing shelter-in-place protocols for immigration enforcement, given ICE's increasingly aggressive and unlawful actions. Prince George's County Public Schools just passed a new shelter-in-place policy last Thursday, March 6, 2026.³ We should have a statewide policy to ensure uniform protection of children throughout the state of Maryland.

Sensitive locations must remain safe and accessible to all Marylanders, regardless of immigration status, to ensure people receive the full rights and protections the law affords them. Our justice system must not be further split into separate classes for the powerful and powerless in our state. Government workers operating at sensitive locations also deserve additional clarity regarding how to manage interactions with immigration enforcement to protect themselves legally.

For the foregoing reasons, the ACLU-MD urges the committee to give SB 810 with the aforementioned amendments a favorable report.