



Kelsey Carlson, Paralegal
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 269
carlsonk@publicjustice.org

Senate Bill 810: Immigration Enforcement - Expanding Sensitive Locations, Notification, and Guidance (Maryland Values Act of 2026)

Hearing before the House Judiciary Committee, April 1, 2026

Position: FAVORABLE

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit legal services organization which advocates for social justice, and economic and racial equity in Maryland, including by upholding the rights of historically excluded and underserved students through individual representation, community outreach, and systemic advocacy. The PJC's Education Stability Project is committed to making discipline responsive to students' behavioral needs, fair, appropriate to the infraction, and designed to keep youth on track to graduate.

PJC strongly supports SB 810, which establishes clear and appropriate boundaries for the role of public-school security personnel by prohibiting them from participating in federal civil immigration enforcement and from sharing student or employee information for immigration enforcement purposes without proper documentation, and expanding protected locations to include certain locations that distribute food to individuals in need. These protections are necessary in protecting equal access to education and food for all Marylanders.

Access to a Free and Public Education

The threat and fear of immigration enforcement impedes equitable access to school and infringes upon the right of all Maryland children to receive a public education regardless of immigration status. SB 810 is necessary to protect that right. In [guidance on immigration enforcement actions](#) at Maryland schools issued in 2025, the Maryland State Department of Education noted that various existing laws protect the confidentiality of student records and advised local school officials to cooperate with law enforcement and federal immigration authorities "in accordance with their school district policies and guidelines and in consultation with their attorneys." This guidance is insufficient to protect students and assuage their credible fears, particularly given the current climate in Maryland schools. For instance, in [a February 2025 social media](#) post tagging ICE, an Overlea High School teacher stated: "If you want the names to investigate families to find illegals, let me know in dm [direct message], . . . "I'll give names and school. All in Md." When students or their families fear that routine school interactions could lead to immigration consequences, that right becomes meaningless in practice.

Families across Maryland already make daily calculations about whether it is safe to attend school, communicate with teachers, or seek help from school staff. If a parent believes enrolling their child, updating emergency contacts, attending a conference, or responding to a school call could expose their family to immigration enforcement, they may avoid school entirely. Students miss class, health services, counseling, meals, and extracurricular activities — not because they do not want to participate, but because they are afraid.

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Public school security personnel are highly visible authority figures. When those personnel are allowed — or perceived — to act as immigration agents or information sources for immigration enforcement, the effect is immediate: students disengage from school. This bill ensures that school security staff serve their intended function — maintaining school safety — rather than being placed in a role that undermines educational access.

Everyone Should Access Essential Services Without Fear of Detention or Separation

This bill also expands the protected locations to include locations that distribute food to individuals in need, which could include places like food pantries, soup kitchens, and community meal sites. These locations exist to meet essential survival needs. If people fear surveillance, enforcement actions, or being identified while seeking food, they may avoid going altogether. Food distribution sites often serve people who are already at higher risk—low-income families, undocumented individuals, unhoused people, seniors, and people with disabilities. Maryland should not force families and individuals to choose between accessing food, and their safety.

SB 810 ensures that Maryland is prioritizing the safety of our immigrant neighbors by protecting the vulnerable spaces they occupy.

For these reasons, Public Justice Center urges the committee to provide a favorable report on SB 810.

For more information contact:

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