



**Testimony in SUPPORT of
Senate Bill 810: Immigration Enforcement - Expanding Sensitive Locations, Notification, and
Guidance**

**House Judiciary and Ways & Means Committee
Position: Support with Amendments**

April 1, 2026

At Strong Schools Maryland, we work to support the faithful implementation and full funding of the promises legislated through the landmark Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Blueprint envisions a public education system where all students can feel safe and supported to learn and thrive in their school community. It was designed to specifically address systemic inequities that disproportionately impact historically marginalized communities. The students and families promised this sense of safety and support include our immigrant communities. As a result, **Strong Schools Maryland offers favorable testimony in support of SB 810 - Public Schools - School Security Personnel - Immigration Investigation and Enforcement with the amendments suggested by We are CASA**, as it strengthens student protections against unlawful immigration enforcement activities.

In January 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rescinded its long-standing "sensitive locations" policy and has since conducted immigration enforcement on school campuses across the country¹. In response to DHS' rescission, the General Assembly passed the Maryland Values Act and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) issued updated guidance on student protections. Despite these actions, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) across the state have interpreted state law in widely varying ways and, on occasion, have created local policy that contradicts both the letter and the spirit of the law. Because of this, we respectfully request that the General Assembly again exercises its leadership to clarify our Maryland values and provide explicit guardrails to protect our students from the aggressive and racially motivated deportation machine.

Across the country and right here in Maryland, masked agents have been abducting our Black and brown neighbors as they commute to work and take their children to school. Many students now feel that they must sacrifice their education to prevent family separation. Others continue to attend class while enduring chronic stress and lack of focus caused by palpable fear and stress. During 2024-2025, student enrollment declined across the state of Maryland. At the same time, chronic absenteeism rates increased and graduation rates decreased for Latino students and for Multilingual students. The

¹ <https://www.k12dive.com/news/ice-activity-on-k-12-school-grounds/810648/>

¹ [How Strict Immigration Enforcement Harms School Children](#)

² [American Immigration Council](#)

³ [Immigration Enforcement and US Schools: What Could Happen and What Education Leaders Can Do](#)

State Superintendent has indicated that if action is not taken to address these inequities, we will only see greater disparities reported for the 2025–2026 school year.

SB810 as currently amended demonstrates the state’s commitment to equitable, high-quality education for all youth. However, two critical amendments are needed to ensure the physical safety and emotional wellbeing of all Maryland students, particularly those under attack by the current deportation machine.

1. First, in schools across the country “shelter in place” is used as a protective measure where there is severe weather, hazardous materials or law enforcement activity occurring within a school zone. “Shelter in place” means that all students and staff continue with regular activities while inside a locked and secured school facility. To ensure both the physical and emotional safety of our school communities, it is critical that a “shelter in place” be enacted when immigration is known to be within a school zone.
2. Secondly, a “school zone” must not be understood as merely the school building itself. In order to combat the aggressive tactics currently being utilized by immigration agents, a school zone must include all property or land owned, leased, used, or operated by or on behalf of a local school system including the following: all areas of school buildings and other facilities, athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, walkways, child care centers, prekindergarten facilities, school transportation vehicles, designated school transportation stops, and institutions of higher education that receives public funds.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland asks that you amend SB810 so that school leaders can act with confidence and speed to protect our students and their caregivers when there is known to be an eminent threat to their safety. Students and families must know that our schools are committed to protecting children to the best of their ability. They must know that our schools are safe zones and that every child, regardless of race, ethnicity or immigration status, has a right to learn in a secure and welcoming environment.

When students feel safe, attendance improves, engagement increases, and families become more involved. This strengthens not only our schools but our entire community.

For these reasons, Strong Schools Maryland respectfully urges the House Committee to issue a favorable report with the recommended amendments.

Please contact Kenzie Funk at kenzie@strongschoolsmaryland.org for additional questions.