



SB810 Immigration Enforcement – Expanding Sensitive Locations, Notification, and Guidance (Maryland Values Act of 2026)

Position: Favorable

April 1, 2026

MAREE is a statewide alliance of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations working to ensure every Black and Brown student in Maryland gets the high-quality public education they are owed. The Maryland Values Act goes to the heart of that mission. A child who fears that walking into school may result in the arrest or deportation of a family member cannot learn. A student who stays home to protect their parents cannot thrive. SB 810 sends a clear message: Maryland's schools are places of learning, not enforcement — and every child belongs here.

This bill strengthens and expands Maryland's existing sensitive locations framework in several critical ways. It prohibits public school security personnel — including school resource officers, security employees, principals, teachers, counselors, and other school staff — from participating in federal immigration enforcement or sharing student, employee, or family information for immigration purposes. It requires school personnel who receive notice of immigration enforcement at a school to immediately notify the county superintendent. It expands the definition of sensitive locations to include school bus stops, school vehicles, and food distribution sites. And it requires the Attorney General to update immigration enforcement guidance annually, with schools required to align their policies accordingly.

Why This Matters for Black and Brown Students

MAREE is holding leaders accountable for delivering a public education system that is joyful, healthy, equitable, engaging, culturally affirming, and free from policies and practices rooted in systemic and structural racism. The threat of immigration enforcement in and around schools is, at its core, a racial equity issue. It is Latino, Black immigrant, and other students of color — disproportionately from mixed-status families — who carry the weight of this fear every day. When a child cannot focus on learning because they are worried about a parent being taken from a parking lot or a school bus stop, the harm is not abstract. It is measurable: in absenteeism, in declining grades, in trauma that follows a child for years.

Research has consistently shown that immigration enforcement activity near schools drives down attendance, particularly among Latino students. The expansion of sensitive locations to include school bus stops and school vehicles in this bill is especially important — the pathway to and from school must be as safe as the school building itself.

School Personnel Must Be Clearly Protected and Guided

One of the bill's most vital provisions is the explicit prohibition on school security personnel participating in federal immigration enforcement functions. In the current climate, school staff need clear legal guidance — not ambiguity — about what they are and are not permitted to do. This bill provides that clarity. It also creates a critical chain of accountability: if immigration enforcement arrives at a school, the county superintendent is notified immediately, ensuring that decisions about how to respond are made at the appropriate level of authority, with legal counsel engaged from the start.

The requirement that the Attorney General update guidance annually ensures that school policies remain responsive to a rapidly changing federal landscape, rather than operating on outdated instructions.

Food Distribution Sites Deserve Protection Too

MAREE also strongly supports the expansion of sensitive locations to include sites that distribute food to individuals in need. Many of Maryland's Black and Brown families depend on food banks, school-based meal programs, and community food distributions. The threat of immigration enforcement at these locations creates impossible choices for families — between feeding their children and protecting themselves. No family should have to make that choice.

Across Maryland's education landscape, systemic and structural racism and inequality are pervasive — and this jeopardizes the potential of our children and the growth and well-being of our entire state. SB 810 is a direct, concrete, and urgently needed intervention. It protects the learning environment, shields vulnerable students and families from fear, and affirms Maryland's commitment to the principle that every child — regardless of immigration status — deserves to be educated in safety and dignity.

MAREE urges this Committee to report SB 810 **favorably** and to move it swiftly to the Governor's desk.

peace & truth,

sharlimar douglass

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