
**Testimony in Support of House Bill 818
Redistricting and Apportionment - Population Count - Citizenship Status**

**House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee
March 2, 2020
2:00 PM**

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The Maryland State Education Association supports House Bill 818, legislation that specifies the decennial census must include all Marylanders, regardless of citizenship status, in all counts for the purpose of federal, state, or local districting plans.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our 896,837 students for careers and jobs of the future. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3 million-member National Education Association (NEA).

The importance of the U.S. Census to the well-being of children and the strength of their public schools cannot be overstated. Using census data, the federal government allocates tens of billions of dollars in education funds to states and localities annually using formulas that factor in population and poverty levels. And when our schools are a safe haven for children and their families, regardless of citizenship status, we must ensure that the counts associated with funding and political representation are inclusive of them too.

An accurate census count is critical to helping educators address the needs of every child who walks through their doors and ensuring that they are part of the representation of our elected officials. The census count happens only once every 10 years; when we undercount children and their families, the consequences can last most of their childhood.

MSEA urges a favorable report of House Bill 818.