



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members

From: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

RE: HB49 - Criminal Procedure – Pretrial Release – Pretrial Risk  
Assessment Instruments

### **The MLLC supports HB49 - Criminal Procedure – Pretrial Release – Pretrial Risk Assessment Instruments**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation which improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a voice in the development of public policy affecting the Latino community and the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB49.

Harmful stereotyping and racial discrimination are among the long standing injustices the Latino community and other people of color face in the criminal justice system. In an attempt to eliminate the biases a court may have towards someone awaiting trial, several states have adopted the use of pretrial assessment tools (PRAT). The purpose of a PRAT is to aid the courts in deciding which individuals will be released from jail before trial based on data collected from a series of questions. It is imperative that PRATs use empirical evidence and are periodically revalidated and revised to warrant a just decision. As laws change, those modifications in criminal law must be taken into account by the PRAT.

HB49 would increase unbiased pretrial release outcomes for individuals who may otherwise be subject to racial discrimination in the pretrial proceeding. This bill requires local jurisdictions who use a PRAT in the pretrial services program to revalidate the tool at least once every three years. We are advocating for a fair criminal justice system by requiring periodic revalidation of these tools to provide accurate, unbiased and fair decisions. HB49 protects the right to receive an equitable outcome for all defendants awaiting trial.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges your favorable report of HB49.