



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair  
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair  
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: April 1, 2021

RE: HB284 Vehicle Laws – Dedicated Bus Lanes – Enforcement

### **The MLLC supports HB284 Vehicle Laws – Dedicated Bus Lanes – Enforcement.**

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB284.

Public transportation is a key element in society because of the high ridership and community dependence on it. Participation in the workforce and our economy is greatly valued, therefore, also ensuring access to opportunities for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or class, is crucial. Efficient and timely methods of transportation are essential for our community members to get to work, school, health care needs, and recreation. Poor bus service becomes an obstacle for Marylanders to attain education, secure and maintain employment, and receive medical treatment. This is a barrier for any resident who relies on public transit, but it disproportionately impacts communities of color.

A [2017 study](#) reported that Latino and Asian-American workers are twice as likely as white workers to not own a vehicle and Black American workers are three times as likely. In Baltimore City, about 30% of residents do not have a privately-owned vehicle. Thousands of individuals require public transportation, including buses. Bus services can become unreliable and lengthy due to non-stop related traffic interruptions. Alleviating factors to this problem are dedicated bus lanes. Dedicated bus lanes can shorten commute times and avoid traffic congestion. Enforcement is necessary to deter unauthorized drivers from attempting to take advantage of these bus lanes. This provides an enhanced bus service that would improve sustainability, enable equitable community development, and reduce traffic congestion.

HB284 prohibits driving a vehicle in a dedicated bus lane with certain exceptions, including a Maryland Transit Administration bus, a school bus, a bicycle, and an emergency vehicle. It also authorizes a local jurisdiction to use a bus lane monitoring system to record images of violations. All Marylanders should have access to reliable and effective public transit. This is a step towards greater opportunities for all.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB284.