



February 13, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

SB 579 - Primary and Secondary Education – Breakfast and Lunch Programs – Universal Expansion

Budget and Taxation Committee:

I write to you today to urge your support for Senate Bill 579, proposed by Maryland Latinos Unidos, a coalition dedicated to supporting and uplifting Latino and immigrant communities across our state.

This bill seeks to address the critical issue of food insecurity among our Latino and immigrant populations, particularly in our schools. By amending the standards of the State Free Feeding Program, this legislation ensures that every student in participating schools, regardless of their economic status, is offered a nutritious breakfast and lunch at no cost. This includes aligning with federal programs such as the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program to meet essential nutrition standards.

Passing this bill is not just about providing meals; it's about fostering equity and justice. For too long, Latino and immigrant communities have faced disparities and inequities, exacerbating their struggles. By guaranteeing access to free meals, we are taking a crucial step towards leveling the playing field and ensuring that every child has the nourishment they need to thrive academically and physically.

Moreover, this bill aligns with our collective values of compassion and solidarity. It sends a powerful message that we stand with our Latino and immigrant neighbors, supporting their well-being and contributing to their success.

By investing in our youth through programs like universal free breakfast and lunch, we are investing in the future prosperity of our state. Healthy, well-nourished children perform better in school, have higher graduation rates, and are better positioned to contribute positively to society.

I urge you to consider the profound impact this bill can have on our communities and the future of Maryland. Let us stand together in support of Senate Bill 579 and demonstrate our commitment to equity, justice, and the well-being of all our residents.

Respectfully,
Carlos Orbe, Jr.
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos