



MARYLAND
**LATINOS
UNIDOS**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

SB0189 - Public Schools - Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts - Development of Content Standards and Implementation

January 16, 2024

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

My name is Carlos Orbe. I am the Communications and Public Affairs Specialist for Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU). I am writing on behalf of my organization, a statewide network dedicated to supporting and advocating for the Latino and immigrant communities in Maryland. Our mission is to address the disparities and inequities faced by these communities and work collaboratively towards meaningful solutions. In this context, we would like to express our strong support for the Public Schools - Inclusive and Diverse English Language Arts - Development of Content Standards and Implementation as outlined in Senate Bill 189.

At Maryland Latinos Unidos, we firmly believe that education plays a crucial role in promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity within our society. We understand that Senate Bill 189 aims to introduce content standards for inclusive and diverse English language arts, which align with our core values of fostering tolerance, belonging, and equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their background or identity.

The proposed legislation's commitment to highlighting and promoting diversity, including economic diversity, equity, and inclusion, resonates deeply with our mission. We appreciate that these standards will address unconscious bias and economic disparities, both at the individual and societal levels. This approach aligns with our goals of creating safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments for all students, including those from Latino and immigrant backgrounds.

By requiring each county board of education to develop and implement curriculum guides for inclusive and diverse English language arts, Senate Bill 189 ensures that the materials used in our schools reflect the rich cultural tapestry of Maryland's communities. This will undoubtedly benefit Latino students by providing them with a more inclusive and representative educational experience.

Furthermore, we believe that the implementation of these standards in public schools starting in the 2026-2027 school year will contribute to a more inclusive and equitable education system. This change will benefit not only Latino students but all Maryland students by promoting understanding, empathy, and respect for diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

Maryland Latinos Unidos wholeheartedly supports Senate Bill 189 and commends the State Board of Education and all stakeholders involved in its development. We believe that this legislation represents a significant step toward achieving our shared goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion in Maryland's public schools.

We look forward to continuing to work alongside you and other stakeholders to ensure that all Maryland students, including Latinos and immigrants, have access to an educational system that values their unique backgrounds and experiences. Together, we can create a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

Respectfully,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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