

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Ben Barnes

Chair, Appropriations Committee

120 Taylor House Office Building

121 Taylor House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 6, Public Institutions of Higher Education, Pregnant and Parenting Students, Plan and Reporting

Dear Chair Barnes,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for House Bill 6, Public Institutions of Higher Education, Pregnant and Parenting Students, Plan and Reporting. HB 6 requires the Maryland Higher Education Commission and public institutions of higher education to collect and report data on student parents and to adopt a plan supporting pregnant and parenting students. The bill is scheduled for a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on January 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m., and the bill's effective date is July 1, 2026.

Student parents are a major and often invisible segment of higher education. National data from the 2020 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study indicates that about 18 percent of undergraduate students are raising children while enrolled, representing roughly 3.14 million student parents. Yet student parents frequently face structural barriers including lack of child care access, inflexible scheduling, and limited awareness of accommodations. These barriers are especially acute for Latino and immigrant families, many of whom balance work, caregiving, and language access needs while pursuing credentials that improve long term economic mobility.

HB 6 moves Maryland toward evidence driven support by requiring consistent data and a concrete institutional plan. That is essential for equity because what is measured is what is improved. With better data, institutions can identify persistence gaps, target resources, and design supports that make completion attainable for student parents, including those in Latino communities striving to move into higher wage careers.

MLU will support successful implementation by partnering with campuses and community organizations to connect student parents to navigation supports, culturally responsive resources, and community based services. We will also help elevate student parent voices so institutional plans reflect real barriers and practical solutions.

MLU urges the House Appropriations Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 6, reinforcing Maryland's commitment to family economic stability, educational attainment, and equitable opportunity.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

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