

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman

Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SB 255, Voting Rights Act of 2026, Counties and Municipal Corporations

Dear Chair Feldman,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for Senate Bill 255, Voting Rights Act of 2026, Counties and Municipal Corporations. SB 255 prohibits methods for electing county or municipal governing bodies that impair the ability of members of a protected class to elect candidates of choice or influence election outcomes through dilution or abridgment of voting rights. SB 255 is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee on January 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m., and is an emergency bill with an effective date upon enactment.

This bill is deeply aligned with MLU's mission because political representation is a gateway to fair distribution of public resources, language access, and responsive services. Maryland's Hispanic or Latino community is a substantial and growing share of the state, with Census QuickFacts reporting about 13.3 percent Hispanic or Latino. Ensuring that election systems do not dilute protected class voting power is essential so Latino communities can effectively advocate for school equity, housing stability, worker protections, and safe neighborhoods.

SB 255 also reflects the broader national reality that state level voting rights protections play a critical role in safeguarding equal participation, including where local election structures can undermine fair representation.

MLU will support the promise of SB 255 through voter education, leadership development, and coalition work that helps communities engage in local governance, participate in public hearings, and build durable civic power.

MLU urges the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 255, reinforcing Maryland's commitment to equitable democracy and meaningful representation for every community.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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