



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Jheanelle K. Wilkins, Chair
Delegate Jessica Feldmark, Vice Chair
Ways and Means Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 2/11/2026
RE: HB0396 - Residential Child Care Programs - Education of
Children and Training of Child and Youth Care Practitioners

The MLLC HB0369 - Residential Child Care Programs - Education of Children and Training of Child and Youth Care Practitioners

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 HB0396.

In total, there are around 3,800 children in the Maryland foster care system.¹ While making up for only 18% of the Maryland child population,² Latino and Hispanic children accounted for about 10% of children in the State's foster care system in 2020. Additionally, in recent years the Maryland Latino and Hispanic population has boomed, with populations increasing in every Maryland County in 2024.³ This increase has also led to an increase in Latino and Hispanic children in the Maryland foster care system. Generally, children in the foster care system are often victims of child negligence and mistreatment, with about 6,000 victims being reported in 2023.⁴ Of these 6,000 child victims, 15% were Latino and Hispanic.

By helping ensure that Maryland residential child care operators are better prepared for, and more attentive to, the children they care for, this legislation generally seeks to improve the lives of children within the foster care system. Specifically, this legislation will require operators to provide children with regularly scheduled study time, assist them with school assignments and tests, and support their participation in extracurricular activities. Additionally, the bill will require that applicants to be residential child and youth practitioners undergo certain training. Ultimately, by implementing these requirements, this legislation will help to improve the well-being of all underprivileged children living in the Maryland foster care system.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0396.

¹ [Out-Of-Home Care - Maryland Department of Human Services](#)

² [Maryland - Child Welfare Outcomes](#)

³ [Maryland - Who Cares: A national Count of Foster Homes and Families](#)

⁴ [Out-Of-Home Care - Maryland Department of Human Services](#)