



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

RE: SB451 Secretary of State - Duties - International Friendship Agreements

The MLLC supports SB451 Secretary of State - Duties - International Friendship Agreements.

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation which improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a voice in the development of public policy affecting the Latino community and the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB451.

For a state as diverse as Maryland, it is crucial we maintain positive relationships with countries around the world. While we live in a society that tends to fear the unknown of immigrants and refugees, Maryland makes strides to be the voice of progress and inclusivity. Our state is home to thousands of migrants from all over the globe and creating an official friendship agreement would strengthen and promote trust with international alliances. The Sister States Program is a network of resources to maintain diplomatic relations and to establish business, cultural and educational exchanges. Currently, the Program has 20 partnerships with 17 different countries; Latin American countries included, Mexico and Peru. The process of forming a sister-state affiliation needs improving to better serve both the state and the interested nation.

SB451 gives authority to the Secretary of State to form and execute International Friendship Agreements. These agreements will serve as a foundation to build a sister-state relationship. We strongly advocate for diversity and the positive impacts multicultural communities can create. This bill aids in building stronger international ties that represent our vibrant communities.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges your favorable report on SB451.