



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

RE: HB991 Procurement - Transparency and Application to County Contracts

The MLLC supports HB991 Procurement - Transparency and Application to County Contracts.

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 HB991.

A 2018 study found that there were an estimated 40 minority business owners per every 100,000 residents across Maryland; our state was ranked number one with the most minority-owned businesses nationwide. With such a high number of businesses, it is important to ensure procurement opportunities are available to all.

The Maryland Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program was created in 1978 and is the oldest program of its kind in the country. Maryland values its minority- and women-owned businesses and the enterprise continues to promote participation in fair contracts between the State and private companies. Several of these companies are growing Latino businesses. However, many MBE business owners are not granted successful procurement bids and are given little to no explanation. If small and minority businesses are going to continue being a priority in our state, it is essential to offer MBE firms the proper tools to seek successful bids.

HB991 establishes transparency in the procurement application process. It requires a staff member from the Governor's Office for Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs to be assigned to each State and county procurement unit. It also requires public postings of procurement information and notices to be sent to bidders and offerors. In addition, bidders will be informed on protest instructions. Our minority businesses are too often overlooked for procurement opportunities. By giving them the adequate resources, they will be able to grow and reach more competitive standards that boost not only their own brand, but their communities and our State.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB991.