



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

RE: SB649 Public Information Act – Motor Vehicle Administration – Warrant for Personal Information and Reporting

The MLLC supports SB649 Public Information Act – Motor Vehicle Administration – Warrant for Personal Information and Reporting.

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 SB649.

In 2013, the General Assembly did the right thing and passed legislation to grant our undocumented immigrants access to driver's licenses. This law addressed road safety issues, so that regardless of an individual's status, people could take their driving test, acquire a driver's license, and obtain car insurance. Undocumented immigrants trusted the state's process, but now many are dealing with unforeseen consequences.

Recent reports indicate that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been retrieving personal information of millions of Marylanders through facial-recognition searches of the state's Motor Vehicle Administration's (MVA) database. ICE officials can run a photograph, without state or court approval, through the MVA system and receive information of potentially matched undocumented immigrants. This is a betrayal of our community's trust—something that we have tried to build up for years. Furthermore, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a federal laboratory, has stated that these facial-recognition algorithms are more likely to misidentify people of color, women, elderly, and children. It is an unreliable tool that if it must be used, requires proper regulation.

SB649 requires ICE officials to present a valid warrant issued by a federal or state court to the MVA for database searches. Without a warrant, the MVA may deny their search request. The legislature made the right decision for Marylanders in 2013, it should do it again this year.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on SB649.