



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

RE: HB624 Juvenile Law - Child Interrogation Protection Act

The MLLC supports HB624 Juvenile Law - Child Interrogation Protection Act

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 HB624.

Everyone has a right to counsel during a custodial interrogation. Youth are more susceptible to self-reported confessing and falsely confessing because they are less likely to exercise their constitutional rights. According to a 2016 Sentencing Project study, minors, especially Black and Latino children are arrested at higher rates than their white counterparts. They face intimidating and coercive interrogation tactics that create situations where children look for almost any way out, including signing confession statements. The responsibility of due process must be taken seriously, for adults *and youth*. Any of our Maryland children who find themselves in these severe conditions must be accurately informed on their rights.

HB624 prohibits a law enforcement officer from a custodial interrogation of a child until the child has spoken with an attorney and the officer has notified the child's parent, guardian, or custodian of their circumstances. An officer's notice must include the child's location, the reason for the child being taken into custody, and instructions on how to make immediate contact with the child. The bill also regulates that the use of a statement or evidence obtained as a result of a violating these procedures as inadmissible in any legal action involving the child. We stand by our commitment to educate, uplift, and protect our youth from any form of systematic oppression. We call on the legislature to protect all Maryland children.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges your favorable report on HB624.