



# MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Shane Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)  
DATE: January 26, 2021  
RE: HB78 Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health  
Equity (The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021).

## **The MLLC supports HB78 Public Health – Maryland Commission on Health Equity (The Shirley Nathan-Pulliam Health Equity Act of 2021).**

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 HB78.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [states](#) that health equity is achieved when every person has the opportunity to reach their full health potential and when no one experiences disadvantages of achieving this potential because of their social position or other socially determined circumstances. It is crucial to identify any barriers that may be preventing health equity in our state. By identifying these health disparities, it will help remove deep rooted inequities that have plagued vulnerable communities for years. It will also provide insight into the appropriate opportunities and resources communities require.

According to the [American Psychological Association](#), discrimination can exacerbate stress, which is linked to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and is seen even in children. People of color, especially Black Americans and Latinos experience this discrimination-related stress. In addition, there is a wealth of [research](#) that indicates factors such as employment, education, and income affect access to quality healthcare in the Latino community.

Socially determined circumstances play a significant role in our health outcomes, therefore, examining various determinants is key to observing their impacts and advancing on health equity in Maryland. The legislature can gain incredible insight

by investigating access to housing, educational attainment, opportunities for and in employment, environmental factors, etc. and their impacts on Marylanders' health. Furthermore, we will be armed with the knowledge to make impactful and necessary change.

HB78 creates the Commission on Health Equity that will use a health equity framework to examine how social determinants such as access to safe and affordable housing, educational attainment, employment opportunities, economic stability, inclusion, diversity, and equity in the workplace, barriers to career success and promotions, access to transportation and mobility, social justice, environmental factors, and public safety impact the health of Maryland residents. In collaboration with state and local leaders, policies changes will be implemented to ensure health outcomes improve for everyone. During a time when health is vital, it is essential that the state moves with an equitable approach.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB78.