



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)

DATE: January 18, 2021

RE: HB411 Criminal Law - Law Enforcement Officers – Prohibition on Sexual Activity

The MLLC supports HB411 Criminal Law - Law Enforcement Officers - Prohibition on Sexual Activity.

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 HB411.

According to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), about every [73 seconds](#) someone is sexually assaulted. The yearly average of victims is 433,648 in the United States and most of these assaults go unreported to law enforcement. Moreover, it is extremely unlikely that a victim will report their sexual abuse to the group that the assistant is a member of.

In [2016](#), the Department of Justice's investigation into the Baltimore City Police Department reported that officers sexually assaulted individuals in exchange for avoiding arrest, cash, and even narcotics. The investigation also stated that these officers took advantage of "vulnerable populations," that often are sex workers, women of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and people suffering from mental illness. In [2018](#), a Prince George's County police officer was charged with sexually assaulting a woman during a traffic stop. These are only a few incidents that have come to light. Law enforcement holds a certain power and authority over our communities. These acts of sexual violence are abuse of power and must be stopped.

HB411 expands the list of individuals a police officer is prohibited from engaging in sexual acts with to include a victim, witness, or suspect in an investigation they are working and a person requesting assistance. Law enforcement is supposed to be a trusted authority in our communities and this legislation is a step to prevent any more abuse of power.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB411.