



## 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 27, 2021

RE: HB413 Judges – Implicit Bias – Testing, Training, and Evaluation

### **The MLLC supports HB413 Judges – Implicit Bias – Testing, Training, and Evaluation.**

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 HB413.

Implicit bias is an unconscious association that can be made toward any social group. This can be manifested in many different forms, such as gender, racial, or religious bias. Unfortunately, implicit bias is very common in our society, to the point that it can be found in our justice system.

Racial disparities have been documented at almost every stage of the criminal processing. A Harvard study showed that judges can [admit](#) that implicit bias exist in the criminal justice system and that their own racial bias can influence their courtroom. However, little to nothing is done to combat bias. These major life changing decisions can contribute to the overrepresentation of minorities in our nation's courtrooms, prisons, and jails. Racial disparities in who is sent to prison can also be aggravated by laws prescribing more severe sentences for offenses for which people of color are disproportionately arrested. Implicit bias in our justice system has dire consequences for our communities. Addressing implicit racial bias at all levels of the criminal justice system is a challenging, but an important undertaking.

HB413 requires the State Court Administrator to ensure that each judge in the State receive tests, training, and evaluation for implicit bias. This bill also requires the Administrator to ensure that data on the tests, training, and evaluation required by the Act is made available to the public on a website or by request. This legislation establishes a greater transparency in judges' rulings, while also allowing the public to observe any ruling patterns based on bias. Justice is [not blind](#) and these is a step that can make an impactful change in our criminal justice system.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB413.