



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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**TO:** Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee Members  
**FROM:** Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)  
**DATE:** February 28, 2022  
**RE:** HB0928 Discrimination in Housing - Citizenship,  
Immigration Status, and National Origin

### **The MLLC supports HB0928 Discrimination in Housing - Citizenship, Immigration Status, and National Origin**

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 HB0928.

Housing is a human right. A right that has often been denied to those most vulnerable among us due to long-persisting discriminatory practices in housing.<sup>1</sup> To this end, legal protections were established to protect residents against housing discrimination based on race, gender, religion, and other classes under the Federal Fair Housing Act and Maryland's Fair Housing statute.<sup>2,3</sup>

Current state law, however, fails to protect Marylanders from housing discrimination on the basis of immigration status. Immigrants face discrimination from landlords, who may refuse to rent to a prospective tenant or who may threaten to report a tenant to ICE as a scare tactic. This tactic is often used to pressure tenants to pay their rent or to pressure tenants into enduring inadequate housing conditions.<sup>4,5</sup> Such actions have prompted a number of jurisdictions to enact protections for immigrant tenants, including the states of Colorado, California, Illinois, and Washington, as well as Prince George's County and the City of Annapolis.<sup>4,6</sup>

The coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated long-standing racial and socioeconomic inequalities, with discriminatory policies and xenophobia falling especially hard on immigrant communities.<sup>7,8,9</sup> Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for unemployment and most forms of federal and state benefits, making it difficult to afford rising rental costs and putting them at a significant financial disadvantage to other renters. These barriers leave immigrants—of many statuses and countries of origin—uniquely vulnerable to eviction and housing insecurity.

The protections offered by this bill are especially urgent to protect the basic needs of all Marylanders as we continue to grapple with the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0928.

<sup>1</sup>“Racial Discrimination in the U.S. Housing and Mortgage Lending Markets: A Quantitative Review of Trends, 1976–2016.” Lincoln Quillian, John J. Lee, and Brandon Honoré. *Race and Social Problems*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-019-09276-x>

<sup>2</sup>“Housing Discrimination Under the Fair Housing Act.” U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/fair\\_housing\\_equal\\_opp/fair\\_housing\\_act\\_overview](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/fair_housing_act_overview) <sup>3</sup>“Housing Discrimination.” State of Maryland Commission on Civil Rights.

<https://mccr.maryland.gov/Pages/Housing-Discrimination.aspx>

<sup>4</sup>“Citizenship, immigration status added to Annapolis fair housing law.” *Capital Gazette*.

<https://www.capitalgazette.com/maryland/annapolis/ac-cn-council-0513-story.html> <sup>5</sup>“Threat to Report

Tenant to ICE May Cost Landlord \$17,000.” *The New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/nyregion/immigrants-tenants-rights.html>

<sup>6</sup>“County Council Adopts Fair Housing Act to Ban Source of Income, Immigration Status and Citizenship Status in Housing.” *TheBayNet*. <https://www.thebaynet.com/articles/1119/county-council-adopts-fair-housing-act-to-ban-source-of-income-immigration-status-and-citizenship-status-in-housing.html>

<sup>7</sup>“COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment, and Civil Unrest: Underlying Deep Racial and Socioeconomic Divides.” Sandro Galea and Salma M. Abdalla. *JAMA*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.11132>

<sup>8</sup>“US Policies Increase Vulnerability of Immigrant Communities to the COVID-19 Pandemic.” Fernando A. Wilson and Jim P. Stimpson. *Annals of Global Health*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.5334/aogh.2897>

<sup>9</sup>“Sheltering in Place in a Xenophobic Climate: COVID-19 and Children in Immigrant Families.” Rushina Cholera, Olanrewaju O. Falusi and Julie M. Linton. *Pediatrics*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-1094>