



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: March 30, 2022

RE: HB0521 Landlord and Tenant - Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent - Shielding of Court Records

The MLLC supports HB0521 Landlord and Tenant - Repossession for Failure to Pay Rent - Shielding of Court Records

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 HB0521.

Maryland's Latino communities have been hit hard by the pandemic both from a public health and economic standpoint. From a public health standpoint, at the peak of the pandemic, Latinos made up a disproportionate number of cases and deaths. This is in part due to the high uninsurance rate that impedes access to diagnosis and treatment. Latinos were not better off from an economic standpoint. They are more likely to work in industries that suffered the economic difficulties of public measures. Despite all the challenges they faced, many of these families were excluded from the federal and local economic relief packages that other vulnerable families were able to access. Other families avoided public service programs because of the public charge regulations that could affect their chance of adjusting their immigration status.^{1,2}

As the communities begin to recover from the effects of the pandemic, those families that did not receive assistance are behind and unable to emerge economically stable. Leaving them at disproportionate risk of facing eviction or of not being able to find stable housing due to history of late or missed rent payments.³ The passage of this bill presents an opportunity for communities to emerge with stronger, more resilient, and more equitable economies. Thus, it will authorize individuals to petition a court to remove from public records any history of repossession of residential property for failure to pay rent that stem from a loss of income related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This will allow them to continue to apply for housing in the future without any economic repercussions.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0521.

1. Amid Confusion over the Public Charge Rule, Immigrant Families Continued Avoiding Public Benefits in 2019, (Urban Institute, May 2020), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/amid-confusion-over-public-charge-rule-immigrant-families-continued-avoiding-public-benefits-2019>.
2. Public Charge Proposed Rule: Potentially Chilled Population Data Dashboard (Manatt Health, 2018), <https://www.manatt.com/insights/articles/2018/public-charge-rule-potentially-chilled-population>. Calculation of the potentially chilled population based on families with at least one noncitizen and earned income under 250 percent of the federal poverty level.
3. Cortina, L. (2020, October 23). *Covid-19's impact on Maryland Latinos*. University of Maryland, Baltimore. Retrieved February 23, 2022, from <https://www.umaryland.edu/news/archived-news/october-2020/covid-19s-impact-on-maryland-latinos.php>