



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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**TO:** Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate David Moon, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members  
**FROM:** Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)  
**DATE:** March 7, 2022  
**RE:** HB0529 Estates and Trusts-Supported Decision Making

### **The MLLC supports HB0529 Estates and Trusts-Supported Decision Making**

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 HB0529.

In 2018, the prevalence of disability among persons of all ages of Hispanic or Latino origin in the US was 8.9 percent.<sup>1</sup> Although, some people with disabilities may need assistance making a whole range of life decisions, they do not necessarily need a guardian to make those decisions for them. Individuals with disabilities choose people they know and trust to be part of a support network to help with decision-making. It is important for organizations to recognize the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse populations they serve.<sup>2</sup> This bill would allow the individual to choose representatives that understand their language and other culturally specific values who would then be able to communicate effectively to all entities. The supporter can assist in helping the person with a disability understand the nature of a decision and help communicate their wishes. The agreement does not replace an appointed guardianship and does not shift legal liability to a supporter or supporting organization.

Supported Decision-making is an alternative to guardianship. Currently, Maryland does not have an effective alternative to guardianship. This bill would legitimize the supported decision-making process, protecting everyone involved. This bill is essential in allowing Maryland Latinos living with a disability to make their own decisions while promoting self-determination and independence.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0529.

1. "2018 Disability Status Report" (Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at the Cornell University ILR School, 2020), [https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport\\_US.pdf](https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/StatusReports/2018-PDF/2018-StatusReport_US.pdf).

2. Michael López, Erin Bumgarner, and Djaniele Taylor, "Cultural Competence Guide - Hispanic Research Center" (National Research Center on Hispanic Children & Families, May 2017), <https://www.hispanicresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Cultural-Competence-Guide-V21.pdf>