



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
DATE: March 7th, 2023
RE: HB1029 Public Safety Lights On for Maryland Program –

Establishment

The MLLC supports HB1029 Public Safety – Lights On for Maryland Program – Establishment

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 HB1029.

Lights On! provides vouchers for bulb repairs to better support low-income drivers to be compliant with traffic laws. The voucher covers up to \$250 of repairs, allowing drivers to fix their light without choosing between repairs, fines, or other necessities. This bill helps move Maryland away from criminalizing poverty when people can't afford to repair their cars and are fined or cited for not doing so. The poverty rate for Latinos in Maryland is 15.6%.¹ It also strengthens the positive interaction between police officers and community members - only 46% of Hispanics say they have a great deal or fair amount of confidence in local police to treat Hispanics and whites equally.² Furthermore, traffic stops for immigrants with or without immigration status, may come with yet another potential repercussion: deportation.³

HB1029 establishes the Lights On for Maryland Program to be administered through the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services, which authorizes law enforcement agencies to provide vouchers to drivers detained at traffic stops to cover the costs of vehicle equipment repairs such as a headlight, taillight, brake light, or turn signal at certain auto repair shops. This bill will facilitate improved police-community relations and improve safety on the roads.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1029.

¹ [Poverty Rate by Race/Ethnicity. \(2022, October 28\). Kaiser Family Foundation.](#)

² [Krogstad, J. M. \(n.d.\). Latino confidence in local police lower than among whites. Pew Research Center.](#)

³ Johnson KP. Americanbar.org.
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/immigration/generating_justice_blog/from-traffic-stop-to-deportation-order--black-immigrant-and-crit/. Published March 1, 2021. Accessed March 7, 2023.