



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO, CHAIR
JOSELINE A. PEÑA-MELNYK, VICE-CHAIR
GABRIEL ACEVERO, TREASURER
JESSE T. PIPPY, SECRETARY
MADELIN MARTINEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate David Moon, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: February 9, 2023

RE: HB0215 Real Property – Limitations on Summoning Law Enforcement or Emergency Services – Prohibition

The MLLC supports HB0215 Real Property – Limitations on Summoning Law Enforcement or Emergency Services – Prohibition

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 HB0215.

Several local governments in Maryland have enacted “nuisance ordinances” to penalize property owners for repeated calls for emergency services to their property. Rather than face penalties, the landlord will often evict the tenant after the first call for emergency services. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of General Counsel, local nuisance ordinances have the effect of being racially discriminatory and often result in evictions of people who are either victims of crime or who are never charged with a crime.¹ Nuisance ordinances have also perpetuated the legacy of racial segregation in housing. Latinos are twice as likely to be renters than whites,² and according to the National Equity Atlas, renters of color in Maryland are disproportionately housing insecure, with Latinx households representing 37%.³ As the ACLU states, nuisance ordinances undermine public safety and punish innocent people - especially vulnerable people who have fewer resources.⁴

HB0215 bars local “nuisance laws” from penalizing landlords and tenants for solely summoning assistance. Additionally, the bill prohibits a landlord from taking certain retaliatory actions because a tenant or another individual summons the assistance of law enforcement or emergency services for certain purposes. This legislation will ensure the right of all Marylanders to call the police without fear of penalty, establish minimum standards for local nuisance ordinances, and bar residential lease provisions that penalize tenants for summoning assistance.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0215.

¹ [Office of General Counsel Guidance on Application of Fair Housing Act Standards to the Enforcement of Local Nuisance and Crime-Free Housing Ordinances Against Victims of Domestic Violence, Other Crime Victims, and Others Who Require Police or Emergency Services. \(2016\). U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.](#)

² [Cilluffo, A., Geiger, A. w. & Fry, R. \(n.d.\). More U.S. households are renting than at any point in 50 years. Pew Research Center.](#)

³ [Rent Debt Dashboard. \(n.d.\). National Equity Atlas.](#)

⁴ [I Am Not a Nuisance: Local Ordinances Punish Victims of Crime. \(n.d.\). American Civil Liberties Union.](#)