



February 13, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

**SB 676 - Tax Assistance for Low-Income Marylanders - Funding**  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

Honorable Members of the Legislative Body,

I write to you today representing Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), a coalition dedicated to advocating for the needs of Latino and immigrant communities across our state. Our mission is rooted in equity, justice, and collective action, aiming to address the disparities faced by these communities and to find viable solutions.

I bring to your attention a crucial bill, SB 676, which holds the potential to significantly impact the lives of Latino communities in Maryland, along with other marginalized groups. This bill focuses on reinstating funding and increasing support for tax assistance programs for low-income individuals.

Allow me to underscore why this bill is of utmost importance:

**Equity and Access:** Latino and immigrant communities often face barriers to accessing vital services, including tax assistance. By allocating resources to programs like the Tax Clinics for Low-Income Marylanders Fund (TCLIM) and the Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope (CASH) Campaign of Maryland, we ensure equitable access to tax preparation services and financial education for these communities.

**Empowerment and Advocacy:** This bill aligns with our core values of empowerment and advocacy. It recognizes the power of collective action and community strength in championing social, economic, health, and environmental justice. Through increased funding and support, we can amplify our advocacy efforts and promote positive change for Latino and immigrant populations.

**Capacity Building:** SB 676 not only provides financial assistance but also focuses on capacity-building initiatives for Latino-serving nonprofits. By offering technical

assistance and grant opportunities, we empower grassroots organizations to better serve their communities, thus fostering long-term resilience and sustainability.

**Community Collaboration:** The bill encourages collaboration and partnership among organizations, businesses, and individuals supporting Latino and immigrant communities. By fostering a "Community of Allies and Friends," we create opportunities for collective problem-solving and consensus-building, strengthening our impact statewide.

In summary, SB 676 represents a critical step towards addressing the systemic inequalities faced by Latino and immigrant communities in Maryland. By investing in tax assistance programs and capacity-building initiatives, we not only support the immediate needs of these communities but also lay the foundation for lasting positive change.

I urge you to consider the profound impact this bill can have on the lives of countless individuals and families across our state. Let us stand together in solidarity and support SB 676 for the betterment of all Marylanders.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to justice and equity for all.

Respectfully,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

Maryland Latinos Unidos