



WRITTEN TESTIMONY

SB090 - Community Development Administration - Live Near Your School Program - Funding and Extension

January 16, 2024

Budget and Taxation Committee

My name is Carlos Orbe. I am the Communications and Public Affairs Specialist for Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU). I am writing to express Maryland Latinos Unidos' (MLU) strong support for the "Live Near Your School Program" as outlined in Senate Bill 90. As a statewide network dedicated to advocating for and supporting Latino and immigrant communities across Maryland, we believe that this program aligns with our mission and can make a significant positive impact on the lives of Latino students and graduates in our state.

Maryland Latinos Unidos is comprised of organizations, businesses, and individuals who are deeply committed to addressing the disparities and inequities faced by Latino and immigrant communities. We believe in finding practical solutions and taking coordinated actions to improve the well-being of these communities. Our focus is on capacity-building within grassroots Hispanic-serving organizations to ensure that all Latinos have access to essential services.

The "Live Near Your School Program" represents an opportunity to address one of the key challenges faced by many Latino students and recent graduates – the burden of student loan debt and the struggle for financial stability. By providing grants to help current students and recent graduates buy homes near their educational institutions, this program can significantly contribute to their economic mobility and overall well-being.

We are particularly encouraged by the fact that the University of Maryland, College Park, would have the option to implement this program. It aligns with our belief in collective action and collaboration to achieve more substantial results. By retaining recent graduates in College Park and the surrounding area, this initiative can stimulate economic growth, support local businesses, and contribute to the development of a thriving college town.

We appreciate your dedication to addressing the needs of our diverse communities in Maryland and believe that the "Live Near Your School Program" is a step in the right direction. It not only aligns with our mission to create a more equitable and supportive environment for Latinos and immigrants but also offers a practical solution to the challenges faced by college students and recent graduates.

We urge you to support Senate Bill 90 and advocate for its passage, as it has the potential to create a brighter and more prosperous future for Maryland's Latino students and graduates. We are confident that, through collaborative efforts, we can continue working towards a more inclusive and thriving Maryland for all.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to seeing positive changes for our communities through the implementation of the "Live Near Your School Program."

Respectfully,

Carlos Orbe Jr.

Carlos Alberto Orbe, Jr.