



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: January 31st, 2025

RE: HB552– Higher Education – Drug Detection Products –
Distribution and Report

The MLLC supports HB552– Higher Education – Drug Detection Products – Distribution and Report

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 HB552.

The opioid epidemic, especially the rise of fentanyl-related overdoses, has significantly affected Latino populations. Of unintentional overdose deaths among the Latino community, 40.2% of these involved Fentanyl, and overall these deaths have increased by 617% in the past decade.¹

This legislation aims to enhance drug abuse prevention efforts and improve student safety on campuses. The bill requires Maryland institutions of higher education to provide drug detection products, specifically disposable tests for detecting fentanyl in drugs, to students free of charge. These products must be made available in student health centers, libraries, and bathrooms. Additionally, institutions must report annually to the Maryland Higher Education Commission on the number of distributed drug detection products and incidents involving the use of naloxone or other overdose-reversing medications.

By mandating the distribution of drug detection products at no cost and ensuring accessibility in key locations, the legislation provides a practical tool to empower students, including those from Latino backgrounds, to protect themselves and their peers.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB552.

¹ [Luna, G., Dermid, G., and Unger, J. B. "Fentanyl Harm Reduction Strategies among Latinx Communities in the United States: A Scoping Review." *Harm Reduction Journal*, vol. 21, no. 150, 2024](#)