

February 25, 2025
The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Maryland General Assembly
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for House Bill 1476 – Labor and Employment – Disclosure of Employee's Immigration Status – Prohibition

Dear Chair Clippinger and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we are committed to advocating for the rights and well-being of Latino and immigrant communities across our state. We have seen firsthand the ways in which immigrant workers, especially those lacking legal status, are exploited in the workplace and subjected to intimidation when attempting to assert their rights. House Bill 1476 is a necessary and critical step toward ensuring that no worker is silenced by the threat of immigration-related retaliation.

This bill explicitly prohibits employers from disclosing or threatening to disclose an employee's immigration status to any public body—including federal, state, or local agencies—when the intent is to conceal violations of labor, benefit, or tax laws. By closing this loophole, HB 1476 will prevent unscrupulous employers from using immigration status as a weapon to silence workers who attempt to report wage theft, unsafe working conditions, or other unlawful employment practices. It further empowers the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to investigate violations and provides due process for alleged violators through an administrative hearing process.

For many Latino and immigrant workers, fear of employer retaliation creates a chilling effect that discourages them from seeking justice. We have worked with individuals who endured wage theft, unfair treatment, and hazardous work environments but hesitated to report violations due to the possibility of being targeted for their immigration status. This bill would provide essential protections, allowing workers to assert their rights without fear and helping to ensure that all employers are held accountable to the same standards under the law.

Beyond the immediate protections it provides, HB 1476 promotes economic justice by reinforcing the principle that all workers, regardless of their background, deserve fair treatment and safe working conditions. It upholds the integrity of Maryland's labor laws, ensuring that unethical employers cannot exploit legal loopholes to evade responsibility while disadvantaging honest businesses that follow the law.

MLU strongly supports this legislation because it aligns with our mission to advance equity and justice for all communities in Maryland. By protecting immigrant workers from retaliation, HB 1476 strengthens Maryland's workforce, promotes fair labor practices, and fosters a more just economy.

We urge the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1476. Enacting this bill will send a strong message that Maryland prioritizes worker protections and will not tolerate the use of immigration status as a tool for exploitation.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos
corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org