

February 10, 2025

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland General Assembly
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for Senate Bill 350 – Primary and Secondary Education – Educator Professional Development – Course on Student Well-Being and Flourishing

Dear Chair Feldman and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we believe that education is the cornerstone of opportunity, and the well-being of our students is essential to their success. Senate Bill 350, which focuses on creating a professional development course for educators centered on student well-being and flourishing, is an essential step toward nurturing healthier, more resilient students.

Every day, we witness the challenges our students face—pressures at home, cultural disconnects, and mental health struggles that often go unaddressed. For Latino and immigrant students, these challenges are compounded by systemic barriers that make it difficult to access adequate mental health support. SB350 provides a vital framework for equipping educators with the tools they need to recognize and respond to the social, emotional, and mental health needs of their students.

By investing in this type of professional development, we aren't just giving teachers more training; we're transforming classrooms into spaces where students feel seen, understood, and supported. For many students, having a trusted, informed adult who knows how to respond to their struggles can make the difference between staying in school and dropping out. This is especially critical for underserved communities where resources may be limited, but the need for support is immense.

A focus on well-being and flourishing is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Students who are emotionally and mentally well are more engaged, more likely to succeed academically, and better prepared for the future. This bill ensures that our educators have the tools to meet the needs of every child, regardless of background or circumstance.

We strongly urge the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB350. Together, we can create a school environment where every student has the opportunity to flourish and thrive.

Sincerely,
Carlos Orbe, Jr.
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