

**February 21, 2025**

**The Honorable Brian J. Feldman**

Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Support for Senate Bill 890 – Housing and Community Development - Division of Just Communities - Establishment**

Dear Chair Feldman and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we are dedicated to promoting equity, justice, and community empowerment for Latino and immigrant populations across our state. We recognize that systemic disparities have long hindered these communities from accessing essential resources and opportunities. Senate Bill 890 presents a pivotal opportunity to address these inequities by establishing the Division of Just Communities within the Department of Housing and Community Development.

This legislation aims to transfer the authority to designate areas as Just Communities from the Governor to the Department, thereby streamlining the process and ensuring that underserved areas receive the attention and resources they urgently need. By altering the criteria for such designations, SB 890 ensures a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to community development. Furthermore, the bill proposes transferring the administration of the Community Health and Safety Works Grant Program to the newly established Division, promoting cohesive and targeted efforts to uplift marginalized communities.

For Maryland's Latino and immigrant populations, the implications of SB 890 are profound. By focusing on historically underserved areas, this legislation promises to channel resources into communities that have long been overlooked, fostering economic growth, improving housing conditions, and enhancing access to essential services. The establishment of the Division of Just Communities signifies a commitment to rectifying past injustices and building a more equitable future for all Maryland residents.

MLU is committed to collaborating with the Department of Housing and Community Development to ensure that the voices of Latino and immigrant communities are heard and that their unique needs are addressed. Through outreach, education, and advocacy, we will work diligently to connect community members with the opportunities and resources facilitated by this legislation.

We strongly urge the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 890. Passing this bill is a decisive step toward dismantling systemic barriers and fostering inclusive growth and development throughout Maryland.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.  
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist  
Maryland Latinos Unidos  
[corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org](mailto:corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org)