

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

Support for House Bill 1420 – Registers of Wills - Identity Verification Without Government-Issued Identification

Dear Chair Clippinger and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we are committed to advocating for policies that remove systemic barriers and create equitable access to resources for Latino and immigrant communities across Maryland. Many individuals within our communities face significant challenges when trying to establish their identity due to a lack of government-issued identification, making it difficult for them to claim inheritances and access estate-related legal proceedings. House Bill 1420 provides a much-needed solution by ensuring that the Registers of Wills offer alternative methods for identity verification, allowing all individuals, regardless of their identification status, to exercise their legal rights.

For many Latino and immigrant families, obtaining government-issued identification can be a long and complicated process, often hindered by legal, financial, or bureaucratic obstacles. As a result, these families risk being denied their rightful inheritance simply because they cannot meet traditional identity verification requirements. HB 1420 addresses this issue by requiring the Registers of Wills, in consultation with the Maryland Registers of Wills Association, to implement alternative verification methods. This bill is essential in ensuring that Maryland's most vulnerable residents are not excluded from estate proceedings based on arbitrary documentation requirements.

By allowing alternative identity verification, HB 1420 strengthens trust between immigrant communities and government institutions. When residents see that their government acknowledges and accommodates their unique circumstances, they are more likely to engage with public systems and seek legal protections. Furthermore, this bill prevents the unnecessary loss of wealth within communities of color by ensuring that rightful heirs are not shut out of estate claims due to bureaucratic barriers.

MLU strongly supports this legislation because it aligns with our mission to remove systemic inequities that disproportionately impact the Latino and immigrant populations. We recognize that fair access to estate proceedings is not just a legal matter—it is an economic justice issue that directly affects families' financial stability and generational wealth.

We urge the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on House Bill 1420. By passing this legislation, Maryland will take an important step toward ensuring fairness, accessibility, and justice for all its residents, regardless of identification status.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
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