



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
Delegate Sandy J. Bartlett, Vice Chair  
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: January 30, 2025

RE: HB165 – Custodial Interrogation of Minors – Admissibility of Statements

### **The MLLC supports HB165 – Custodial Interrogation of Minors – Admissibility of Statements**

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 HB165.

This bill addresses a critical issue that disproportionately affects Latino youth. The bill seeks to end the use of deceptive interrogation tactics, such as lying and presenting false evidence, which are currently legal and can lead to coerced, false confessions. This is especially concerning for Latino communities, where youth may face additional barriers such as language differences, mistrust of law enforcement, and systemic inequities.<sup>1</sup> False confessions are a leading cause of wrongful convictions, and the Exonerated Five case in New York serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of such tactics.<sup>2</sup> Adolescents are particularly susceptible due to underdeveloped brain areas responsible for judgment and decision-making.<sup>3</sup>

This bill aims to safeguard minors during interrogations and ensure the integrity of their statements in legal proceedings. It establishes a rebuttable presumption that any statement made by a minor during a custodial interrogation is involuntary and inadmissible in juvenile or criminal proceedings if the law enforcement officer used information they knew to be false to elicit the statement. Through these provisions, the bill protects youth from wrongful convictions, an issue that disproportionately impacts Latino youth.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB165.

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<sup>1</sup> [Washington Innocence Project. "Causes of Wrongful Conviction." Washington Innocence Project.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Innocence Project. "False Confessions." Innocence Project. 1 May 2023.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Abrams, Zara. "What Neuroscience Tells Us about the Teenage Brain." Monitor on Psychology, American Psychological Association, 25 Aug. 2022.](#)