



## 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: February 26, 2025  
RE: HB1190 – Criminal Law – Youth Accountability and Safety Act

### **The MLLC supports HB1190 – Criminal Law – Youth Accountability and Safety Act**

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 HB1190.

HB1190 proposes changes to Maryland's criminal law regarding first-degree murder convictions for individuals who were children at the time of the offense. The bill specifies that a child cannot be found guilty of first-degree murder under the felony murder provision unless they were a principal in the first degree, meaning they were the main actor in the crime. Additionally, the bill establishes a process for individuals convicted of felony murder as minors before September 30, 2025, to petition for a review of their conviction while incarcerated or under supervision. If the court determines that the petitioner would not be guilty of first-degree murder under the new standard, it may vacate the conviction, grant a new trial, or resentence the individual. The bill aims to ensure fair accountability for juvenile offenders by considering their level of involvement in serious crimes.

This bill addresses systemic disparities in the juvenile justice system that disproportionately impact Latino youth. Studies have documented that Latino communities face challenges such as racial profiling, harsher sentencing, and limited access to legal resources. Latino youth are often subjected to more severe sentencing compared to their White counterparts for similar offenses.<sup>1</sup> By ensuring that children cannot be convicted of felony first-degree murder unless they were a principal in the first degree, HB1190 aims to prevent excessive and unjust sentencing of young individuals who may have been present but not directly responsible for a crime.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1190.

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<sup>1</sup> Piquero, Alex R., et al. *Youth Offending and Latino/a Justice in the United States: Disparities and Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System*. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2005, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/208129.pdf>.