



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 27, 2025
RE: HB579 – Criminal Procedure – U Nonimmigrant Status
Petitions

The MLLC supports HB579 – Criminal Procedure – U Nonimmigrant Status Petitions

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 HB579.

This bill makes numerous changes to the U Nonimmigrant Status petition (U-Visa) process to correct inconsistency across the state in the certifications of U-Visas for victims of crime and ensure that federal law and guidelines are followed. Some jurisdictions interpret federal law more narrowly than they should. The bill includes the attorney, victim advocate, or other representative of the victim as an individual who may request certification for victim helpfulness. It also establishes there is no statute of limitations for when a qualifying criminal activity occurred relative to the request for victim helpfulness. Finally, it requires a certifying official to provide written explanation to the victim (or other requester) that sets forth reasons why the available evidence does not support issuance of the certification.

HB579 further strengthens protections for immigrant victims of crime, many of whom are from the Latino community. The U-Visa program is a critical tool that allows undocumented victims to cooperate with law enforcement without fear of deportation, helping to build trust between immigrant communities and the justice system. Specifically, the U-Visa program allows non-citizen victims of crimes and certain family members to live in the United States for up to four years.¹ This bill ensures that U Nonimmigrant Status adheres to federal standards and is consistent across the state so that all non-citizen victims can benefit from the program.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB579.

¹ [Know Your Rights: New U Visa Bona Fide Determination Procedure](#)