

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Guy Guzzone

Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee

3 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for SB 499, Washington County, Notice of Tax Sale, Alterations

Dear Chair Guzzone,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for Senate Bill 499, Washington County, Notice of Tax Sale, Alterations, which is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee on February 11, 2026.

Tax sale processes can be a powerful driver of displacement and intergenerational wealth loss for low income homeowners, heirs property holders, and immigrant families who may be unfamiliar with complex notice requirements, language heavy documents, and tight response timelines. Maryland advocates and legal service organizations have documented how tax sale systems can strip equity from low income residents and create confusion that increases the likelihood of home loss.

SB 499 strengthens notice by increasing the number of required notices sent to the property owner after a tax sale in Washington County and by requiring a timely second notice. This practical change helps ensure families receive clear, repeated communication at a moment when one missed letter can lead to irreversible harm.

Implications for Latino and immigrant Marylanders

For Latino and immigrant homeowners, improved notice reduces the chance that a household loses a home due to missed information rather than inability to resolve the underlying delinquency. A second timely notice can create a realistic window for families to seek payment plans, legal help, or community support, and it can help adult children and extended family members mobilize resources to protect a home that may represent decades of sacrifice. Even modest procedural protections matter because they reduce the risk that families are pushed into displacement, overcrowding, and school disruption for children.

MLU can amplify the impact of SB 499 by working with Washington County community partners to provide multilingual education on tax sale timelines, connect families to legal services and housing counselors, and build trusted referral pathways before properties reach the point of sale.

MLU urges the Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 499, strengthening due process and preventing preventable displacement in Washington County.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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