

The Honorable Brian Feldman

Chair, Economic Matters Committee

House Office Building, Room 231

6 Bladen Street

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 0314, Automation Technology Deployment Assessment and Displaced Employee Retraining Fund, Established

Dear Chair Feldman,

Maryland Latinos Unidos respectfully supports House Bill 0314, Automation Technology Deployment Assessment and Displaced Employee Retraining Fund, Established. HB 0314 is under consideration by the House Economic Matters Committee during the 2026 Legislative Session and responds to the accelerating impact of automation on Maryland's workforce.

HB 0314 establishes a framework to assess the deployment of automation technologies and creates a dedicated fund to retrain workers who are displaced as a result. The bill recognizes that technological change, while economically beneficial in some sectors, can also deepen inequality when workers are displaced without adequate transition support.

Latino and immigrant workers are disproportionately concentrated in industries most vulnerable to automation, including warehousing, food processing, manufacturing, hospitality, and certain service sectors. National labor data consistently show that Latino workers are overrepresented in low wage jobs with limited job security and fewer employer sponsored training opportunities. Without targeted intervention, automation threatens to widen wage gaps and economic instability for families already facing housing and cost of living pressures.

HB 0314 directly addresses these risks by prioritizing assessment, accountability, and retraining. By pairing technology deployment with workforce investment, the bill helps ensure that productivity gains do not come at the expense of working families. Retraining programs supported by the fund can provide pathways into higher wage, future facing occupations, particularly when designed with language access and credential recognition in mind.

The implications for Latino and immigrant communities are significant. Economic displacement often cascades into housing insecurity, food instability, and reduced educational opportunity for children. HB 0314 helps prevent these outcomes by stabilizing employment and promoting upward mobility. MLU can play a vital role in connecting affected workers to retraining opportunities, advocating for culturally competent program design, and ensuring community voices inform implementation.

Maryland Latinos Unidos urges a favorable report on HB 0314. A just transition to an automated economy must include the workers who power it, and this legislation moves Maryland toward a more equitable and resilient labor market.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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