

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama

Chair, Economic Matters Committee

230 Taylor House Office Building

231 Taylor House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 307, Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund, Alterations

Dear Chair Valderrama,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for House Bill 307, Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund, Alterations. This legislation alters the purpose of the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund, requires the Comptroller to administer the Fund at the direction of the Office of Social Equity, and updates requirements for county plans, reporting, and compliance.

A reinvestment fund only achieves its purpose when governance is clear, accountability is enforceable, and the communities most harmed by past policy are meaningfully centered. HB 307 strengthens administration, compliance, and coordination so the Fund can more reliably support community based investments that repair harm and expand opportunity.

The need for repair is grounded in well documented disparities from cannabis enforcement and criminalization. Public reporting on enforcement disparities has consistently found severe racial inequities in marijuana arrests in the United States. While Maryland has moved toward legalization and repair, communities that experienced disproportionate enforcement still face barriers in employment, housing, education, and business formation.

Latino and immigrant Marylanders also benefit from well governed reinvestment because our communities are part of the broader ecosystem harmed by criminalization, poverty, and disinvestment. Maryland is 13.3 percent Hispanic or Latino and 16.6 percent foreign born. Stronger oversight through the Office of Social Equity can help ensure investments reach neighborhoods where language access, worker protections, and culturally competent services are often under resourced.

Implications for Latino and immigrant Marylanders include increased access to community services, workforce pathways, small business supports, and neighborhood level investments that improve safety and economic stability. HB 307 helps ensure the Fund operates with clear direction and accountability so communities can see tangible outcomes, not just promises.

MLU urges the Economic Matters Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 307, strengthening Maryland's commitment to equity, accountability, and community repair.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

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