

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Wells

Chair, Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

145 Lowe House Office Building

142 Lowe House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Support for HB 86, State and Local Employees, Cancer Screening, Paid Leave

Dear Chair Wells,

Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU) is honored to express our strong support for House Bill 86, State and Local Employees, Cancer Screening, Paid Leave. HB 86 provides certain State, county, and municipal employees up to 4 hours of paid leave in any 12 month period for cancer screening, with appropriate approval. The bill is scheduled for a hearing in the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee on January 27, 2026 at 2:00 p.m., and the bill's effective date is July 1, 2026.

Access to paid time for preventive care is a health equity issue. Research has long recognized that lack of paid leave is a barrier to cancer screening because preventive services require time away from work that many families cannot afford. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also notes that Hispanic and Latino workers have the lowest access to paid sick leave across major racial and ethnic groups, and that workers with paid leave are more likely to see a doctor and obtain routine cancer screening.

For Latino and immigrant households, early detection can mean the difference between manageable treatment and devastating financial and health consequences. HB 86 is a practical step that removes a predictable barrier and supports a culture of prevention. It also reinforces public sector leadership by modeling workplace policies that improve access to care.

MLU will amplify HB 86 by educating community members about preventive screening, sharing culturally and linguistically appropriate resources, and partnering with trusted health organizations to reduce misinformation and improve uptake.

MLU urges the House Government, Labor, and Elections Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 86, advancing prevention, reducing disparities, and supporting healthy working families across Maryland.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Communications and Public Affairs Specialist

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