

February 23, 2026

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
2 East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Vice Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
2 East
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support for Senate Bill 791 Correctional Services and Public Safety Immigration
Enforcement Prohibitions Community Trust Act

Dear Chair Smith,

Maryland Latinos Unidos respectfully supports Senate Bill 791, the Community Trust Act. This bill would set clear boundaries that keep Maryland correctional systems and public safety functions focused on state and local responsibilities rather than immigration enforcement, with specific prohibitions that reduce the risk of unlawful detention, family separation, and fear driven disengagement from essential public systems.

For Latino Marylanders, the stakes are immediate. Maryland's Latino community is a significant and growing share of the state's residents, and many families include immigrants and mixed status households who are uniquely vulnerable to the ripple effects of immigration enforcement entanglement. When people fear that contact with government systems will expose them or a loved one to immigration consequences, they avoid reporting harm, avoid seeking services, and withdraw from institutions that are supposed to keep them safe.

Research has consistently found that aggressive immigration enforcement and perceived collaboration between local systems and immigration enforcement can reduce crime reporting and cooperation with investigations in immigrant communities. That fear does not make communities safer. It creates openings for exploitation, wage theft, domestic violence, and other harms to persist unchecked because people are afraid that seeking help will put their family at risk.

Senate Bill 791 advances public safety and due process by establishing bright lines. It supports a system where correctional and public safety personnel can do their jobs without being pressured into federal immigration functions that undermine community trust. In practice, these boundaries help ensure that victims and witnesses can come forward, that families can access courts and

services, and that local agencies can focus on crime prevention and public safety outcomes rather than immigration status.

Implications for Maryland Latinos Unidos and the communities we serve

This bill expands freedom and opportunity by reducing the constant fear that ordinary life contact with public systems can trigger immigration consequences. That freedom translates into measurable community stability: more reporting of crimes, more willingness to cooperate with legal processes, and greater access to services that prevent harm before it escalates.

Maryland Latinos Unidos can support implementation by partnering with legal services and community based organizations to educate families about their rights and the limits of local involvement in immigration enforcement. We can also work with state and local partners to develop language accessible materials so that Spanish speaking residents understand what the bill changes and how to seek help safely.

For these reasons, Maryland Latinos Unidos respectfully urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 791.

Sincerely,

Carlos Orbe, Jr.
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist
Maryland Latinos Unidos
corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org