



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett, Chair
Delegate Debra Davis, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 3/11/26
RE: HB1536 - Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency
(MELT) Act

The MLLC supports HB1536 - Maryland Enforcement Limits and Transparency (MELT) Act

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB1536.

Over the last year, ICE enforcement operations against immigrants have skyrocketed, with the brunt of their efforts being targeted at members of the Latino community.¹ ICE often conducts these operations by using various state resources, as is the case in Maryland. Ways that ICE has used Maryland resources include: 287(g) agreements with local law enforcement, collection of Marylanders personal data, and the general usage of Maryland resources, contractors, and professionals to detain or gain access to Maryland citizens. As a result of this, many Latino families face tremendous stress and any trust that there was between local law enforcement and Latino communities has been eroded.²

This legislation would seek to comprehensively prohibit ICE agents from engaging with Maryland agents or exploiting Maryland resources in regard to carrying out their immigration enforcement actions unless it is judicially approved. By doing so, this legislation would better protect Maryland Latino communities from the growing pressures of federal immigration enforcement. Ultimately, helping to reaffirm Maryland's commitment to its immigrant communities and to fundamental constitutional values of fairness.

The passage of HB444 earlier this session was significant but it is not sufficient on its own. Federal immigration enforcement still relies on quieter but equally harmful forms of local cooperation including voluntary notifications and transfers, information sharing, and handoffs that happen outside of public view and without additional statewide protections, Marylanders remain vulnerable to being pulled into the deportation machinery without due process. Police Data from the Maryland Office of the Public Defender underscores just how indiscriminate this enforcement has become: for every one 287(g) detainer placed on a person convicted of a violent crime, 115 are placed on individuals with no convictions at all.³ The safety and dignity of immigrant Marylanders must not depend on which county they live in or which sheriff happens to be in office.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1536.

¹ [ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Statistics | ICE](#)

² [Local Law Enforcement Must Focus on Keeping Marylanders Safe](#)

³ [Office of the Public Defender: Maryland Values Act](#)