



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair  
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: February 24, 2021

RE: HB758 Maryland Licensure of Certified Midwives Act

### **The MLLC supports HB758 Maryland Licensure of Certified Midwives 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 HB758.

In the United States, about [700 women die](#) annually because of pregnancy or delivery complications—the highest maternal mortality rate among all industrialized nations. The maternal mortality rate is even more concerning among women of color, especially Black women who are estimated [three times](#) more likely to suffer a pregnancy or delivery complication death. While these are nationwide findings, Maryland has a similar trend.

Last year, the Maryland Maternal Mortality Review Report stated that our rate had only slightly decreased in recent years. Additionally, the racial disparity between White women and Black women is quite significant; the maternal mortality rate for Black pregnant women is [nearly four times](#) higher than White pregnant women. The Review also reported that [80 percent](#) of pregnancy-related deaths were preventable.

Due to these alarming disparities in maternal health, midwifery has increased in demand. Certified midwives can offer unique, individual-centered care that meets the needs of an expecting mom. By increasing the number of midwives, more pregnant women, especially women of color, will have access to life-saving care.

HB758 establishes licensure for certified midwives, expanding the numbering of qualified midwives in Maryland. Certified midwives that have not completed nursing school but have an accredited midwifery certification will be able to apply for licensure through the State Board of Nursing. More certified and licensed midwives mean more access to maternal healthcare. This bill is a major step in addressing the racial disparities of our maternal mortality.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB758.