



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mldlatinocaucus.org

DAVID FRASER-HIDALGO, CHAIR
JOSELINE A. PEÑA-MELNYK, VICE-CHAIR
GABRIEL ACEVERO, TREASURER
JESSE T. PIPPY, SECRETARY
CESIAH FUENTES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MEMBERS

ALFRED CARR
ALONZO WASHINGTON
ANNE HEALEY
ARIANA B. KELLY
BEN BARNES
BENJAMIN KRAMER
BONNIE CULLISON
BROOKE LIERMAN
CAROL L. KRIMM
CHARLOTTE CRUTCHFIELD
CHERYL KAGAN
CRAIG ZUCKER
DAVID MOON
DIANA FENNELL
EMILY SHETTY
EREK BARRON
ERIC LUEDTKE
GERALDINE VALENTINO-SMITH
GUY GUZZONE
HEATHER BAGNALL
J. SANDY BARTLETT
JAMES ROSAPEPE
JARED SOLOMON
JAZZ LEWIS
JEFF WALDSTREICHER
JEN TERRASA
JESSICA FELDMARK
JHEANELLE WILKINS
JILL P. CARTER
JIM GILCHRIST
JULIAN IVEY
JULIE PALAKOVICH CARR
KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
KEN KERR
LESLEY LOPEZ
LILY QI
LISA BELCASTRO
LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
MAGGIE MCINTOSH
MALCOLM AUGUSTINE
MARC KORMAN
MARY A. LEHMAN
MARY WASHINGTON
MELISSA WELLS
MIKE ROGERS
NICOLE WILLIAMS
PAMELA BEIDLE
PAMELA QUEEN
REGINA T. BOYCE
ROBBYN LEWIS
SHANE PENDERGRASS
SHANEKA HENSON
SHEILA RUTH
SHELLY HETTLEMAN
STEPHANIE SMITH
SUSAN C. LEE
TERRI HILL
VAUGHN STEWART
WANIKA FISHER
WILL SMITH

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus (MLLC)

DATE: February 17, 2021

RE: HB1312 COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021

The MLLC supports HB1312 COVID-19 Eviction and Housing Relief Act of 2021.

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 HB1312.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has severely impacted our state's public health and economy. Our work force looks very different to how it looked a year ago. In January 2020, Maryland's unemployment rate was [3.3 percent](#); most recent available data reports that December 2020's rate was [6.3 percent](#). For communities of color and low-income families, it has been even direr. [53 percent](#) of Latinos reported that they or someone in their household have been laid off or have received reduced wages because of COVID-19. Black and Latino Americans are [more likely](#) to be experiencing trouble paying their bills, medical care, rent or mortgage.

The pandemic has caused great instability and the risk of a major housing crisis. By the end of 2020, [studies](#) indicated that COVID-19 impacts on homeowners and tenants still existed and worsened for Black and Latino households. They also reported that if something does not change, this economic crisis could widen the [wealth gap](#) for Black and Latino families, and also intensify the hardship for landlords. Maryland must adopt policy that will mitigate the severe, long-lasting effects of COVID-19.

HB1312 extends the eviction moratorium orders to protect tenants for the rest of 2021. The bill creates the Maryland Rent Relief Fund to offer grants to local jurisdictions to establish a financial relief program for landlords and renters. The Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development will also be required to create and distribute Know Your Rights literature, with availability in various languages, for tenants and landlords. Late fees, interest charges, and rent increases will not be allowed during the state emergency.

So many families have suffered enough. It is our responsibility to ensure that no Marylander, especially a vulnerable individual, is displaced during this crisis.

The MLLC supports this bill and urges a favorable report on HB1312.