



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair
Delegate Sandy J. Bartlett, Vice Chair
Judiciary Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: February 29, 2024
RE: HB542 - Department of Human Services – Children in Foster Care – Luggage

The MLLC supports HB542 - Department of Human Services – Children in Foster Care – Luggage, 2024

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 HB542.

In Maryland, there are approximately 3,800 children in foster care and 64% of them are children of color.¹ According to a recent article in the Washington Post, there is conflicting information regarding what children are being given to transport their personal belongings.² The Department of Human Services (DHS) has said they have luggage for foster children, yet foster parents and news accounts have shown children arriving at a new placement with plastic garbage bags.³

HB542 will require DHS to stock and maintain a supply of new luggage (i.e. suitcase, duffel bag, backpack or similar container) for the transport of personal belongings by children in foster care and require DHS to begin tracking and maintain records of the type of container a child is given to transport their personal belongings and and if, in fact, they were issued a disposal bag in lieu of new luggage. HB542 will ensure that any child who is removed from a household under certain circumstances has a new suitcase, duffel bag, backpack or similar container, in lieu of a disposable bag. This new luggage becomes the personal property of the child in foster care for reuse if or when the child is changing placement and may not be reclaimed by DHS and may not become the property of the foster parent.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB542.

¹ [Department of Health and Human Services](#)

² [Silverman](#)

³ *Ibid.*