

**JARED SOLOMON**  
*Legislative District 18*  
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee

*Subcommittees*

Capital Budget

Vice Chair, Education  
and Economic Development

*House Chair*  
Joint Audit and Evaluation  
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 222  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
301-858-3130 · 410-841-3130  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3130  
Fax 301-858-3053 · 410-841-3053  
Jared.Solomon@house.state.md.us

**THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**February 13, 2024**  
**HB 569 – Credit for All Language Learning (CALL) Act**  
**House Appropriations Committee**

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to present on my bill HB 569 to award credit for English language courses taken at community colleges.

At its heart, the Credit for All Language Learning Act, or CALL Act for short, is about equal credit for equal work. Currently, Maryland higher education institutions award credit for students who learn French or Italian as an additional language, but not for multilingual students who are taking academic English language courses. This is unequal, and it is exactly this inequality the CALL Act seeks to set right.

This inequality harms our immigrant students' academically and financially. It means they pay for one or more semesters of English Language Learning (ELL) classes, almost always at community colleges, that do not count toward associate degrees or credit certificates, and that do not transfer to bachelor's degree programs. The CALL Act requires community colleges to award credit for students' hard work in ELL classes, just as they currently do for other language classes. Additionally, it requires public and private higher education institutions to accept transfer of those credits in fulfillment of World Languages and/or Humanities requirements of bachelor's degree programs, just as they currently do for other languages classes, while still respecting the autonomy of institutions. There is a sponsor amendment that clarifies that intent as well.

The positive impact the CALL Act would have on increasing students' course success, degree completion, and transfer rates is significant. According to the Community College Research Center at the Teachers College of Columbia University, every additional semester a student spends in a program where their coursework does not count toward a degree decreases their chances of achieving it. The CALL Act would benefit community colleges, universities, and Maryland's economy. Community colleges would likely see increased enrollment rates from our state's fast-growing and vibrant immigrant communities. Our community colleges would also likely see increased retention and completion rates and a shrinking equity gap.

Colleges and universities would benefit by broadening the pathway for ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse students—students who each also have unique stories of overcoming adversity and striving for success in a new country—which is especially important given the

Supreme Court's recent decision to limit their ability to use the value of racial diversity when considering admissions.

Finally, Maryland's economy would benefit as more multilingual people pursue advanced degrees, earn credentials leading to higher, family-sustaining wages, start small businesses, and expand Maryland-based companies' ability to engage in international trade. We need multilingual nurses, doctors, and hospital staff. We need multilingual K-12 teachers and school staff. The CALL Act helps our community colleges, colleges, and universities meet those workforce needs faster, more efficiently, and more equitably.

Increasingly, multilingualism is understood as an asset in all sectors of education and the economy. The CALL Act affirms that asset-based view of multilingualism. It does so in an equitable manner that advances immigrant and language justice. And it does so in a way that brings all sectors of our education system together in a mutually beneficial reform.

**Thank you for your consideration and I would urge a favorable report for HB569.**