



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Ben Barnes, Chair  
Delegate Mark S. Chang, Vice Chair  
Appropriations Committee Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus  
DATE: 2/14/24  
RE: HB569 - Higher Education - Credit Eligibility and Transfer of Credits - English as a Second Language Courses (Credit for All Language Learning (CALL) Act)

### **The MLLC supports HB569 - Higher Education - Credit Eligibility and Transfer of Credits - English as a Second Language Courses (Credit for All Language Learning (CALL) Act), 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 HB569.

In Maryland, multilingual English learners (MELs) do not receive credit for English language courses at community college, but peers whose first language is English can receive a college credit for passing language courses.<sup>1</sup> The discussion to grant MELs college credits for English language courses has sparked research analyses since 1977.<sup>2</sup> Studies over the decades have revealed that many educators support college credits for English language courses because they require as much or more academic effort as the average college course. In addition, compared to other language credit-earning courses (i.e. Spanish, Arabic), English language courses are not remedial, as they are often categorized.<sup>3</sup> English language courses require students to fully understand the semantics inherent in the language, rather than simply memorize words and their translation.<sup>4</sup>

Not granting credits for English-language courses creates barriers for MEL students. In Maryland, only 19% of Latinos (ages 18 to 34) were enrolled in higher education and 29% of Latinos (25 and older) had earned an associate degree or higher.<sup>5</sup> At two-year institutions, the graduation rate for Latino students was 30%, compared to 39% of Latino students who were no longer enrolled.<sup>6</sup>

HB569 will require a public community college to consider language courses as eligible for certain credits toward an associate's degree, under certain circumstances. In addition, the bill will require that any credits earned for a course at a community college in the State, in accordance with H § 15-117(B)(3) of this Article, be transferable to any institution of higher education in the

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<sup>1</sup> [Call Act background](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Academic Credit for ESL Classes?](#)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> [Latino College Completion - Maryland](#)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

State. The bill will prohibit higher education institutions from denying the transfer of certain credits for language or humanities courses.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB569.