

SENATE BILL 506

P1

(8lr2047)

ENROLLED BILL

—Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs / Ways and Means—

Introduced by **Senators Rosapepe, Colburn, Kelley, Lenett, and Madaleno**

Read and Examined by Proofreaders:

Proofreader.

Proofreader.

Sealed with the Great Seal and presented to the Governor, for his approval this

_____ day of _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ M.

President.

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on the Preservation of *Heritage*
4 Language Skills in Maryland; providing for the membership and duties of the
5 Task Force; ~~requiring the election~~ providing for the selection of a chair of the
6 Task Force; requiring the State Department of Education to provide staff for the
7 Task Force; prohibiting members of the Task Force from receiving certain
8 compensation; authorizing a member to receive certain reimbursement;
9 requiring the Task Force to report its findings and recommendations to the
10 Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for
11 the termination of this Act; requiring the Task Force to continue to advise the
12 Governor and the General Assembly on certain matters until a certain time;
13 and generally relating to the Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage
14 Language Skills in Maryland.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.

Italics indicate opposite chamber / conference committee amendments.



1 Preamble

2 WHEREAS, While it is important for new Americans to learn and master
3 English, there is also a critical shortage of Americans proficient in languages other
4 than English; and

5 WHEREAS, The need for world language skills is increasingly important in
6 national security, defense, education, and in maintaining a competitive edge in
7 business and trade; and

8 WHEREAS, The language fluency level required for success in national security
9 and in a global economy often far exceeds that previously considered sufficient; and

10 WHEREAS, Since business partners in Maryland's top foreign export markets
11 speak over a dozen different languages, including Arabic, Spanish, German, Italian,
12 French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, better command of those and other
13 international trading languages is essential to furthering commerce and enhancing
14 Maryland's economic health; and

15 WHEREAS, Native English speakers in traditional American academic
16 programs generally do not study foreign languages for extensive periods; and

17 WHEREAS, Of those native English speakers who study the most difficult,
18 high-interest languages, few reach the federal standard for "limited proficiency level,"
19 with only 9% attaining limited proficiency in listening, 11% in speaking, and 35% in
20 reading, and many fewer ever become proficient at the federal "professional" standard;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Maryland's heritage language speakers, descendants of immigrants
23 to Maryland, who are raised in homes in which foreign languages are spoken but are
24 educated in English, comprise a valuable and vastly underutilized linguistic resource
25 for the United States; and

26 WHEREAS, According to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau's Current
27 Population Survey of 2005, more than 735,000 individuals in Maryland who are at
28 least 6 years old, or nearly 14.5% of the State's population, speak foreign languages at
29 home; and

30 WHEREAS, Students in Maryland public school systems speak at least 150
31 different languages; and

32 WHEREAS, Among the State's heritage language speakers, many are fluent in
33 languages of high interest for national security, defense, business, and trade
34 industries, including more than 12,000 speakers of Persian, nearly 9,000 speakers of
35 Urdu, more than 8,000 speakers of Arabic, nearly 49,000 speakers of Chinese, nearly
36 34,000 speakers of Korean, nearly 15,000 speakers of Hindi, and more than 19,000
37 speakers of Russian; and

1 WHEREAS, Such valuable heritage language skills tend to diminish rapidly as
2 individuals and families are assimilated; and

3 WHEREAS, The speakers of heritage languages ought to be encouraged and
4 assisted in maintaining, developing, and improving their native language abilities
5 while improving their English skills; and

6 WHEREAS, Because the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed
7 2008 the International Year of Languages, promoting diversity and international
8 understanding worldwide, it is a particularly good time to make full use of the many
9 and varied language resources in our State; now, therefore,

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
11 MARYLAND, That:

12 (a) There is a Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in
13 Maryland.

14 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

15 (1) one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President
16 of the Senate;

17 (2) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of
18 the House;

19 (3) the Secretary of Business and Economic Development, or the
20 Secretary's designee;

21 (4) the Secretary of Education, or the Secretary's designee;

22 (5) the Secretary of Human Resources, or the Secretary's designee;

23 (6) the Secretary of the Maryland Higher Education Commission, or
24 the Secretary's designee;

25 (7) the Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Community
26 Initiatives, or the Executive Director's designee;

27 ~~(7)~~ (8) the following eight members, appointed by the Secretary of
28 Education:

29 (i) four members from the business community, including
30 representatives of the Fort Meade Alliance and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce,
31 or similar organizations; and

1 (ii) four members who are familiar with heritage language
2 programs and who are members of ethnic community groups;

3 ~~(8)~~ (9) the following three members as representatives of the University
4 System of Maryland:

5 (i) one representative of the National Foreign Language Center
6 at the University of Maryland; and

7 (ii) two other members to be designated by the Chancellor of the
8 University System of Maryland; and

9 ~~(9)~~ (10) one member who is a representative of Maryland community
10 colleges, appointed by the Maryland Association of Community Colleges.

11 ~~(e) The Task Force shall elect a chair from among its members.~~

12 (c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall jointly
13 select the chair of the Task Force from among its members.

14 (d) The State Department of Education shall provide staff for the Task Force.

15 (e) A member of the Task Force:

16 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

17 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
18 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

19 (f) The Task Force shall:

20 (1) study methods of advancing and preserving heritage language
21 skills in Maryland;

22 (2) consult with educators and other experts in the field of world
23 language training and development;

24 (3) review and identify the best practices of heritage language
25 programs that are being or will be conducted by government, schools, community
26 groups, religious groups, and ethnic groups in the State, across the U.S., and
27 internationally;

28 (4) compile data on the number of actual and potential heritage
29 language speakers in Maryland;

1 (5) develop a process to identify priority heritage languages that is
2 flexible enough to meet current and future national security and international
3 business requirements;

4 (6) consider new, cost-effective, and innovative ways to encourage and
5 facilitate heritage language learning while also encouraging new citizens of the U.S. to
6 learn and master English; and

7 (7) recommend actions and programs that ensure maximum
8 preservation of heritage language skills and identify measures of success for each.

9 (g) On or before January 1, 2009, the Task Force shall report its findings and
10 recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State
11 Government Article, the General Assembly.

12 (h) The Task Force shall continue to advise the Governor and the General
13 Assembly on the implementation of its recommendations until this Act is abrogated
14 and of no further force and effect.

15 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
16 July 1, 2008. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the
17 end of July 31, 2009, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
18 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.