



**International Rescue Committee**

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**Rescue.org**

March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Chair, Delegate Ben Barnes  
House Appropriations Committee  
Annapolis, Maryland

**Re: H.B.1098, “Education - English Learners and Dual Language Immersion Programs - Funding and Establishment (Multilingualism Is an Asset Act)”**

Dear Chair Barnes and Committee Members,

Education is the foundation upon which children build their lives and careers, and by extension, shape this country’s future. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) believes every child deserves equitable access to the opportunities that education can offer. Therefore, it is with great pride that the IRC in Maryland extends its support for H.B. 1098, which would expand language access in K-12 education.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is an international humanitarian organization that serves people displaced by war, conflict, and natural disaster. The IRC is present in 17 states across the U.S. with two offices here in the state of Maryland- in Silver Spring and Baltimore. We provide critical support to newly-arrived refugees, asylum-seekers, and the broader immigrant community. Among our priorities, we work towards ensuring that English language learner (ELL) students receive the education and support needed to successfully transition into American civic and economic life.

H.B. 1098 recognizes that several obstacles perpetuate existing disparities between students who are proficient in English and those who are not. With the additional resources and support systems allocated in H.B. 1098, ELL students will make significant strides in their education and move closer to achieving their full potential, including by seeing improvement in their school attendance, academic performance, and enrollment in postsecondary education.

Refugee and immigrant youth are ready to make the most of the opportunities that education can provide, building a better future for their families and communities. This legislation values the multilingual background of refugee and immigrant students, while extending the support they need in order to reach their greatest potential. We urge you to support H.B. 1098.

Respectfully,

Ruben Chandrasekar  
Executive Director  
IRC in Maryland