

**Senate Bill 451**  
**Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study**  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 12, 2025  
**Support**

**Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,**

**Catholic Charities of Baltimore supports Senate Bill 451**, which would require the Maryland Department of Labor to allow individuals to take all components of the GED exam in a single language, either English or Spanish, rather than having to switch between languages for different sections. Additionally, the bill mandates the Department to assess the feasibility and cost of offering the GED exam in languages beyond English and Spanish.

This bill aligns with Catholic Charities' long-standing commitment to supporting all Marylanders, including our new neighbors who face barriers to equitable access to education due to limited English proficiency. For a century, Catholic Charities has provided care and services to improve the lives of Marylanders in need. We accompany Marylanders as they age with dignity, support their pursuit of employment and career advancement, heal from trauma and addiction, achieve economic independence, prepare for educational success, and welcome immigrant neighbors into Maryland communities.

As the largest private provider of Human Services in Maryland, we serve Marylanders who face numerous barriers to achieving their educational and career goals. Our immigrant services program assists thousands of Marylanders annually who have the skills and determination to contribute to our workforce but face obstacles due to language accessibility.

Maryland's immigrant population continues to grow and diversify, bringing valuable skills and experience to our communities. However, many newcomers find their career advancement stalled by the inability to obtain high school equivalency credentials in their primary language. This creates an unnecessary barrier to employment and higher education opportunities. By allowing the full GED test to be taken in one language and exploring additional language options, SB 451 would help ensure that all Marylanders have equitable access to the educational credentials they need to build successful careers and support their families.

**For these reasons, Catholic Charities of Baltimore urges the committee to issue a favorable report for Senate Bill 451.**

**Submitted By:**  
**Madelin Martinez, Assistant Director of Advocacy**