

# **SB451.pdf**

Uploaded by: Beth Jarrett

Position: FAV

**Written Testimony Submitted for the Record to the  
Maryland Senate - Education, Energy, and the Environment  
For the Hearing on Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination -  
Requirements and Study (SB451)  
February 12, 2025 - Favorable**

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Free State PTA, (FSPTA) represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. Free State PTA is composed of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business as well as community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and family engagement in Maryland. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities and a strong advocate for public education. We are pleased to offer a favorable testimony in strong support of SB 451 - Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study.

This legislation will provide language access to Spanish speaking Marylanders by allowing all part of the General Education Development (GED) exam to be offered in Spanish and for study on the feasibility of additional language options to be conducted. This aligns with the Free State PTA Principles for Action, which states that all children have a right to an excellent, equitable, education.

SB 451 will support the rising generation of multilingual professionals by providing Spanish as an optional language to complete GED examinations. The GED is designed to test a high school level understanding of math, social studies, science, and language arts. Out of the states that have similar GED guidelines as Maryland, all, with the exception of Maryland, allow the RTLA exam to be completed in English or Spanish, including Alaska and Hawaii. In Maryland, currently, an individual can take three out of four sections in Spanish, with the Reasoning Through Language Arts (RTLTA) section being the only one required to be taken in English. Unfortunately, this requirement creates an unnecessary barrier for Spanish speaking examinees in obtaining their GED certification.

As demonstrated by other state's implementation of the nationally recognized Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Project (I-BEST), many immigrant students do not have time to develop linguistic, academic, and professional skills in a linear manner. This is particularly true of our state's low-income residents. Professional, familial, and economic time constraints require that they instead develop multiple skills simultaneously in order to meet their full professional potential in a timely manner.

Individuals seeking to complete their GED certifications show a willingness to seek further education opportunities and a determination to use the resources available to them to succeed. Outdated policies should not hinder their success.

Therefore, Free State PTA urges the committee to provide a favorable report of Senate Bill 451.

Gerrod Tyler, President  
Free State PTA  
president@fspta.org

**MLU Support Letter - SB451.pdf**

Uploaded by: Carlos Orbe, Jr.

Position: FAV

**February 10, 2025**

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman  
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Support for Senate Bill 451 – Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study**

Dear Chair Feldman and Esteemed Committee Members,

At Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), we believe that education is a lifelong journey and a gateway to opportunity. Senate Bill 451, which focuses on expanding access to high school diplomas through examination and conducting a study on adult education requirements, represents a vital opportunity to remove barriers for individuals striving to improve their futures.

For many adults in Maryland, especially in the Latino and immigrant communities, earning a high school diploma is not just an educational milestone—it's a second chance. It opens doors to better job opportunities, higher education, and greater economic stability. SB451 ensures that adults seeking to earn their diploma through examination are given a fair shot by updating outdated requirements and launching a comprehensive study to address gaps in adult education services.

Too often, adult learners are overlooked in educational policy discussions. Yet, they are some of the most determined and hardworking members of our community, balancing jobs, families, and personal responsibilities while pursuing their education. By modernizing the pathway to a high school diploma, SB451 provides these individuals with a realistic and achievable way to reach their goals.

This legislation is about equity and inclusion. It acknowledges the diverse experiences and challenges faced by adult learners and aims to meet them where they are. By removing unnecessary obstacles, we can empower thousands of Marylanders to unlock new opportunities and contribute more fully to their communities.

We urge the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to issue a favorable report on SB451. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive Maryland, where every learner—regardless of age—has the chance to succeed.

Sincerely,  
Carlos Orbe, Jr.  
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist  
Maryland Latinos Unidos  
corbejr@mdlatinosunidos.org

**BTU Testimony Senate Bill 451.docx.pdf**

Uploaded by: Cristina E Duncan Evans

Position: FAV



AFT 340 AFL-CIO  
Seton Business Park  
5800 Metro Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21215-3209

**Senate Bill 451 – Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study**  
**Education, Energy and the Environment**  
**February 12, 2025, 1pm**

**FAVORABLE**

On behalf of the Baltimore Teachers Union (BTU), which represents thousands of dedicated educators and school staff in Baltimore City Public Schools, I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 451. This bill would allow individuals taking the General Educational Development (GED) test to complete all sections in the language of their choice, removing a significant barrier to educational attainment and economic mobility.

In Baltimore City, many of our students and their families speak languages other than English at home. We serve a diverse community that includes immigrants, refugees, and multilingual learners who bring valuable skills and perspectives to our classrooms and workforce. However, despite their knowledge and abilities, language barriers often prevent individuals from earning a high school equivalency diploma, limiting their access to higher education and better job opportunities.

Currently, GED test takers must complete the Reasoning Through Language Arts section of the test in English, even if they are more proficient in another language. This requirement unfairly disadvantages non-native English speakers, testing their language proficiency rather than their actual knowledge and skills. By allowing test takers to complete the entire GED in the language of their choice, SB451 ensures that all Marylanders—regardless of their primary language—have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their academic competence and earn a credential that can change their lives.

As educators, we know that equitable access to education is fundamental to breaking cycles of poverty and increasing workforce participation. Maryland has already taken steps to support multilingual learners, and this bill represents an important continuation of that commitment. It aligns with the principles of fairness, inclusion, and opportunity that should guide our state's education policies.

The Baltimore Teachers Union urges the committee to give SB451 a favorable report. This legislation is not just about expanding language access—it is about ensuring that all Maryland residents have a meaningful pathway to success, regardless of the language they speak.

**The Baltimore Teachers Union urges the committee to issue a favorable report of Senate Bill 451.**

# **SB 451 - Adult Education - High School Diploma by**

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



# MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

7 School Street • Annapolis, Maryland 21401-2096

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*President*

**Donna S. Edwards**

*Secretary-Treasurer*

**Gerald W. Jackson**

## **SB 451 - Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study**

**Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee**

**February 12, 2025**

### **SUPPORT**

**Donna S. Edwards**

**President**

**Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 451. My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO. On behalf of Maryland's 300,000 union members, I offer the following comments.

SB 451 increases accessibility for individuals who wish to obtain a General Education Development certification (GED) by allowing test takers to take the exam in a language of their choosing. This legislation eliminates certain barriers that disproportionately affect those who speak languages other than English and create equitable opportunities for education in Maryland.

Many residents in our state come from diverse backgrounds who bring valuable skills and perspectives to our workforce. Currently, GED test takers must complete the Reasoning Through Language Arts section which is exclusively offered in English, hindering their ability to show their actual knowledge and skills. By allowing test-takers to complete the GED in a language of their choice, SB 451 recognizes that language proficiency should not be a determinant of an individual's ability to demonstrate educational competency and provides a fair path to earning a high school diploma.

The ability to obtain a GED significantly increases job opportunities and access to higher education, ultimately changing lives. Removing language barriers will empower more individuals to complete their education, contribute to our workforce and support their families. SB 451 is a necessary step forward in supporting multilingual learners and aligning with our values of fairness, inclusion and opportunity.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on SB 451.



# **SB 451**

Uploaded by: Kristina Curley

Position: FAV



## MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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ASHANTI MARTINEZ, CHAIR  
GABRIEL ACEVERO, VICE-CHAIR  
DENI TAVERAS, TREASURER  
JOE VOGEL, SECRETARY  
JASON A. AVILA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair  
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Members  
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus  
DATE: February 12, 2025  
RE: SB451- Adult Education – High School Diploma by  
Examination – Requirements and Study

### **The MLLC supports SB451 – Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study**

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 SB451.

SB451 will benefit Maryland's Latino community by addressing current education disparities and enhancing economic opportunities. In 2022, the national dropout rate for Hispanic students was 7.9% higher than the overall rate of 5.3%.<sup>1</sup> By providing the GED entirely in Spanish, this bill will work to remove a barrier to educational achievement for Latino students. Improved educational attainment can lead to greater economic stability. Data shows that individuals with a GED earn approximately \$700 more per month than those with only some high school education.<sup>2</sup> This bill actively invests in the economic and social mobility of the Latino community, making it an important bill for the Latino Caucus.

This bill makes important changes to individuals' access to a high school diploma through the GED test by mandating the Department of Labor allow individuals to take all four sections in the same language, choosing between Spanish and English. In addition, the bill requires that the Department of Labor evaluate the feasibility and costs of offering the test in other languages, in addition to Spanish, and submit these findings in a report to the General Assembly. This report is an important step in improving educational outcomes and economic stability for non-native English speakers across the state.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on SB451.

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<sup>1</sup> [Nation Center for Educational Statistics. Status Dropout Rates, 2024.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Ewert, Stephanie. "GED Recipients Have Lower Earnings, Are Less Likely to Enter College." \*Census.Gov\*, 8 Oct. 2021.](#)



**SB451\_MSEA\_Lamb\_FAV.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lauren Lamb

Position: FAV

**FAVORABLE**

**Senate Bill 451**

**Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study**

**Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment**

**February 12, 2025**

**Lauren Lamb**

**Government Relations**

The Maryland State Education Association supports Senate Bill 451, which would require the Maryland Department of Labor to allow an individual to take all components of the General Educational Development (GED) test in the same language from the English or Spanish language examinations offered by the Department. It would also require the Department to study the feasibility and cost of offering the GED test in additional languages and to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

MSEA represents 75,000 educators and school employees who work in Maryland's public schools, teaching and preparing our almost 900,000 students so they can pursue their dreams. MSEA also represents 39 local affiliates in every county across the state of Maryland, and our parent affiliate is the 3-million-member National Education Association (NEA).

Offering the GED test in multiple languages is a common-sense measure to make a high-school equivalent credential more accessible to test-takers from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Expanding opportunities for community members to earn a GED credential promotes equity and yields wide-reaching social benefits—those with a GED earn more than those without a high school diploma or equivalent, and some research indicates that children's literacy and academic development benefits when a parent earns a GED.<sup>1</sup> The measures in this bill are especially relevant to Maryland's increasingly multilingual workforce, and we applaud steps to increase educational access at every life stage.

**We urge the committee to issue a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 451.**

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<sup>1</sup> Increased Educational Attainment among U.S. Mothers and their Children's Academic Expectations. National Library of Medicine (2018). <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5793933/>

# **SB451 Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Madelin Martinez

Position: FAV

**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**

# Montgomery County BOE Testimony - SB 451\_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Patrica Ursprung

Position: FAV





# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

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**BILL:** SB 451

**TITLE:** Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study

**DATE:** February 12, 2025

**POSITION:** Support

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**CONTACT:** Patricia Ursprung, Coordinator, Legislative Affairs

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The Montgomery County Board of Education supports Senate Bill 451.

Currently, the Maryland Department of Labor requires an individual to take the Reasoning Through Language Arts portion of the General Educational Development (GED) exam in English if that person takes any other portion of the exam in Spanish. Maryland is the only state with this requirement. This bill would obligate the Department of Labor to rescind that requirement, meaning test-takers would be permitted to take each portion of the exam in their chosen language, thereby eliminating a substantial barrier to passing the exam.

Montgomery County Public Schools sees the impact of this barrier every year in its Career Readiness Education Academy (CREA). The CREA program is for Emergent Multilingual Learners who are at least 18 years old, and are unlikely to meet all graduation requirements prior to turning 21 years old. The CREA program provides a pathway to earning a high school diploma via GED exam along with developing important work skills and gaining industry certifications.

During the 2023-2024 school year, MCPS's CREA program had a total of 200 students enrolled at some point that year. This number fluctuates as students enter and exit the program. By the end of the school year, only three individuals had passed all sections of the GED exam, with the Reasoning Through Language Arts section having by far the lowest attempt and pass rate. Specifically, for the social studies and science portions of the exam, the pass rate was about 40% (social studies – 77 students made 131 attempts and 52 passed; science – 79 students made 114 attempts and 45 passed). Passage was a little lower for math, at about 33% (58 students made 96 attempts and 32 passed). The pass rate for Reasoning Through Language Arts was just 10% (33 students made 66 attempts and 7 passed). While test takers need to pass all four sections of the GED exam, the Reasoning Through Language Arts section, taken in English, is the single



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Expanding Opportunity and Unleashing Potential*

15 West Gude Drive ♦ Suite 100 ♦ Rockville, Maryland 20850

biggest obstacle to earning the GED credential for many. Without this added language requirement, it is likely that the pass rate for CREA students would increase.

The stated reason for the language restriction is so the test taker can demonstrate English proficiency; however, English proficiency is not an explicit requirement of the GED exam. The Montgomery County Board of Education understands the importance of English proficiency - it is an important skill for native speakers of languages other than English to succeed in this country. However, Maryland is the only state that imposes the added requirement that the language arts section of the GED exam be taken in English. This creates an artificial and substantial barrier for an individual who is otherwise able to pass the GED exam, especially when language development can and will continue to occur once the individual is able to enter the workforce. This restriction is unwarranted and prohibits otherwise qualified individuals from gaining employment because they lack a high school diploma. In order to eliminate this hurdle, **the Montgomery County Board of Education supports SB 451, which removes the requirement that a portion of the GED exam be taken in English.**

# **Testimony in support of SB0451 - Adult Education -**

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0451\_RichardKaplowitz\_FAV

02/12/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz  
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

**TESTIMONY ON SB#0451 - POSITION: FAVORABLE**  
**Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study**

**TO:** Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

**FROM:** Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ **SB#/0451, Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study**

Maryland Physicians Care has noted that: <sup>1</sup>

Marylanders who speak only English population is 4,611,882 which is 79.30% of the population. There are 42 other languages or groupings of languages spoken in Maryland.

Acknowledging that this paradigm exists, and that having an educated populace in Maryland is a core function and goal of Maryland this bill promotes that goal.

This bill will require the Maryland Department of Labor to allow an individual to take all components of the General Educational Development Test in the language of their choice. It will mandate a requirement for the Department to study the feasibility and cost of offering the examination in additional languages and to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2026.

The results of those findings will guide future actions to be taken to resolve this situation.

**I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0451.**

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.marylandphysicianscare.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Maryland-Physicians-Care-Statewide-Language-Profile\\_FINAL\\_Aug2024.pdf](https://www.marylandphysicianscare.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Maryland-Physicians-Care-Statewide-Language-Profile_FINAL_Aug2024.pdf)

**CASA\_FAV\_SB451.pdf**

Uploaded by: Shannon Wilks de Benitez

Position: FAV



**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0451**

Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 12, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

CASA strongly supports Senate Bill 451- Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study. CASA is a national powerhouse organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class: Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities.

With a membership of over 173,000 members, CASA creates change with its power-building model blending human services, community organizing, and advocacy to serve the full spectrum of the needs, dreams, and aspirations of members. For nearly forty years, CASA has employed grassroots community organizing to bring our communities closer together and fight for justice, while simultaneously providing much-needed services, helping to ensure that low-income immigrants can live rich and full lives. For over a decade, CASA has provided first and second generation immigrant high school students with culturally and linguistically relevant leadership development as well as college and career readiness. For the last three decades, CASA has offered one of the state's largest nonprofit ESOL programs for working-class immigrants. CASA also works in partnership with local community colleges to provide vocational training that meet Maryland's workforce demands in professions such as electricity, HVAC, and childcare.

Senate Bill 451 advocates for the Maryland Department of Labor to allow an individual to take all components of the GED or General Educational Development Test in either English or Spanish depending on individual preference. Furthermore, the bill advocates that the Maryland Department of Labor study the feasibility and cost of offering the test in additional languages and to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2026.

This proposal would align Maryland with the equitable practices of virtually all other states that have been offering both Spanish and English versions of the GED since the test was updated in 2014. The current lack of language access has created significant professional barriers to adult immigrants seeking to reach their full professional potential and make the most impactful contributions to Maryland's workforce. Furthermore, the current lack of language access for the GED Test in Maryland is negatively impacting the professional potential of our K-12 youth.


Many immigrant students are joining our communities in their later high school years with English fluency creating a significant barrier to timely high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment, and employment in critical state industries.

As demonstrated by other state's implementation of the nationally recognized Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Project (I-BEST), many immigrant students do not have time to develop linguistic, academic, and professional skills in a linear manner<sup>1</sup>. This is particularly true of our state's low-income residents. Professional, familial, and economic time constraints require that they instead develop multiple skills simultaneously in order to meet their full professional potential in a timely manner. The current policy of offering the GED Test exclusively in English means that many must first achieve English fluency and then pursue academic and finally professional goals. This is an unrealistic timeline for many individuals and creates further strains on the Maryland economy at a time when there are workforce gaps in critical industries such as teaching and healthcare. Providing the GED Test in Spanish is an equitable solution that allows Marylanders to develop multiple skills in a more efficient manner. It will remove a significant barrier to those who seek access to the careers that best match their talents and most impactfully contribute towards a thriving Maryland economy.

**CASA respectfully asks the committee to consider the numerous advantages of SB 451 and submit a favorable report.**

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<sup>1</sup> [Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training \(I-BEST\)](#) ;

 The Maryland Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Project

# **SB451 Adult Education High School Diploma by Exami**

Uploaded by: sharlimar douglass

Position: FAV





## Testimony in Support of SB451

Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study

Ways and Means

January 29, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Atterbeary and Members of the Committee,

MAREE is in full support of **Senate Bill 451 – Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study**. The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE), a coalition of education advocacy, civil rights, and community-based organizations committed to eliminating racial disparities in Maryland’s education system.

Senate Bill 451 advocates for the Maryland Department of Labor to allow an individual to take all components of the GED or General Educational Development Test in either English or Spanish depending on individual preference. Furthermore, the bill advocates that the Maryland Department of Labor study the feasibility and cost of offering the test in additional languages and to report its findings and recommendations to certain committees of the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2026.

This proposal would once again align Maryland with the equitable practices of virtually all other states. Prior to 2014, the GED Test was available in both English and Spanish. However, when the test was updated that year, Maryland discontinued offering the test in Spanish. This shift in language access has created significant professional barriers to adult immigrants seeking to reach their full professional potential and make the most impactful contributions to Maryland’s workforce. Furthermore, the current lack of language access for the GED Test in Maryland is negatively impacting the professional potential of our K-12 youth. Each year there is an ever-increasing influx of immigrant students into our public education system. Many are joining our communities in their later high school years with English fluency creating a significant barrier to timely high school graduation, post-secondary enrollment, and employment in critical state industries.

As demonstrated by other state’s implementation of the nationally recognized Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Project (I-BEST), many immigrant students do not have time to develop linguistic, academic, and professional skills in a linear manner. This is particularly true of our state’s low-income residents. Professional, familial, and economic time constraints require that they instead develop multiple skills simultaneously to meet their full professional potential in a timely manner. The current policy of offering the GED Test exclusively

[mareealliance.org](http://mareealliance.org)

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in English means that many must first achieve English fluency and then pursue academic and finally professional goals. This is an unrealistic timeline for many individuals and creates further strains on the Maryland economy at a time when there are workforce gaps in critical industries such as teaching and healthcare. Providing the GED Test in Spanish is an equitable solution that allows Marylanders to develop multiple skills in a more efficient manner. It will remove a significant barrier to those who seek access to the careers that best match their talents and most impactfully contribute towards a thriving Maryland economy.

A Spanish GED provides significant benefits for individuals whose primary language is Spanish, allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge and abilities without being hindered by a language barrier, leading to better test performance, increased access to education and employment opportunities, and a greater sense of empowerment by taking the test in their native tongue; essentially enabling them to showcase their true capabilities without the obstacle of translating the test content.

**MAREE respectfully asks the committee to consider the numerous advantages of SB 451 and submit a favorable report.**

peace and truth,

The Maryland Alliance for Racial Equity in Education (MAREE)

# **SB451-King-Sponsor Amendment.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FWA



**SB0451/553423/1**

AMENDMENTS  
PREPARED  
BY THE  
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE  
SERVICES

03 FEB 25  
15:10:57

BY: Senator King  
(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 451

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 5, after the second “the” insert “same”; and in line 6, strike “of their choice”.

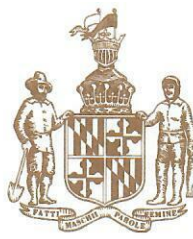
AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 19, strike “LANGUAGE OF THEIR CHOICE” and substitute “SAME LANGUAGE FROM THE ENGLISH- OR SPANISH-LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT”.

# **SB451-King-Sponsor Testimony.pdf**

Uploaded by: Senator Nancy King

Position: FWA



**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Senate Bill 451 Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination –  
Requirements and Study**

February 12, 2025

Mister Chairman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

Maryland currently offers three different ways for Adult Learners to earn a High School Diploma outside of traditional K-12 school:

1. the GED® Test, which consists of four individual subject area exams,
2. the Adult High School Pilot Program,
3. and the National External Diploma Program®, a portfolio-based program.

GED® test takers are currently allowed to complete three of the GED® modules in English or Spanish but must take the Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA) module in English. Senate Bill 451 will allow adults without a High School Diploma to take all components of the high school diploma by exam in either English or Spanish.

The current requirement that the RLA section of the GED® be taken exclusively in English creates an unnecessary challenge for individuals who are otherwise capable of passing the GED® exam, and Maryland is the only state that still mandates passage of this English-only portion of the GED®.

English proficiency is not an explicit requirement for the GED® and we know that language development is an ongoing process that individuals develop throughout their lifetime. These individuals will have the opportunity to strengthen their English language skills as they join and contribute to the workforce.

Senate Bill 451 further requires the Maryland Department of Labor to study the cost and feasibility of offering the examination in other languages and reporting back to this committee on or before December 1, 2026.

NOTE: A bill drafting error was discovered after the bill's first reading. I am offering an amendment to correct the error and conform the bill to the House crossfile.

This legislation will remove barriers and open doors to opportunities for all Marylanders and so I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 451 with amendments.