

## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 325

**TO:** Ways and Means Committee  
**FROM:** Maryland Department of Labor  
**DATE:** January 29, 2025  
**BILL:** Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study

### **MDL POSITION: SUPPORT**

The Maryland Department of Labor (MDL), which oversees all High School Equivalency (HSE) Examinations in Maryland, including the GED® Test, is in **strong support** of HB 325. The bill contains two key provisions: 1) requiring the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL) to allow adults without a High School Diploma (HSD) to take all components of the high school diploma by exam in the same language (either English or Spanish), and 2) requiring MDL, on or before December 1, 2026, to study the feasibility and cost of offering the examination in additional languages.

Maryland currently has three different ways for Adult Learners to earn HSDs outside of traditional K-12 school: the GED® Test, which consists of four individual subject area exams (known as modules), the Adult High School Pilot Program, as authorized by 2017's HB1381, and the National External Diploma Program®, a portfolio-based program. GED® test takers are currently allowed to complete three GED® modules in English or Spanish, but must take the Reasoning through Language Arts (RLA) module in English.

MDL strongly supports offering the RLA module in Spanish to Maryland's Adult Learners; the Department is **actively** updating the regulations that oversee HSEs in Maryland ([COMAR .09.37.01.01 -.19](#)) to allow adult learners to complete **all** sections of the GED® Exam in Spanish. In 2023-2024 alone, approximately 9,131 Adult Learners enrolled in Adult Education and Literacy Services programming (where MDL has oversight) spoke Spanish as their primary language; of those, 4,177 (46%) did not have a HSD. This group comprises 19% of all Adult Learners in Maryland. There are currently 763 GED® Test takers who have taken several modules in Spanish, but have not yet received a HSD, and whom MDL estimates would significantly benefit from being able to take the RLA in Spanish.

HSDs are life-changing credentials for Marylanders, enabling them to access job training opportunities that lead to family-supporting careers. MDL is in strong support of HB 325, which will empower more Marylanders to choose the language they test in and to grow their careers.

The Department respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 325. For questions, please contact Andrew Fulginiti, at [Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov](mailto:Andrew.Fulginiti@maryland.gov).