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January 27, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Testimony in Support of House Bill 325

Dear Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of WorkSource Montgomery (WSM) and Montgomery County's Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), I am writing to express our support for House Bill 325 concerning Adult Education – High School Diploma by Examination – Requirements and Study. This legislation represents a crucial step toward enhancing access to educational and employment opportunities and addressing barriers to economic mobility for many residents of Montgomery County, MD.

WSM and our WDB are committed to empowering individuals through education, training, and career advancement opportunities. HB325's provisions to allow individuals to complete all components of the General Educational Development (GED) Test in a single language, including Spanish, directly align with our goal of ensuring all residents have equal access to economic opportunity. Earning a high school diploma through the GED program is a critical milestone for individuals seeking to enter or advance in the workforce. For English Language Learners, the current requirement to navigate the GED in multiple languages can pose an unnecessary barrier to success. By permitting the completion of the test in other languages, HB325 ensures individuals can demonstrate their knowledge and skills without the added challenge of language limitations.

A high school diploma is often a prerequisite for livable wage employment and access to educational opportunities. By removing language barriers, HB325 empowers adult learners to achieve this credential, thereby enhancing their employability and economic stability. Furthermore, as Maryland seeks to expand our state's economy, HB325 directly contributes to this goal as it will serve as a catalyst for upskilling opportunities leading to higher earnings and greater individual economic contributions.

Sincerely,

Anthony Featherstone, Executive Director
WorkSource Montgomery, Inc.

Omar Lazo, Chair
Montgomery County LWDB

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