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January 27, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Maryland General Assembly
House Ways and Means Committee
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support for House Bill 0325 – Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 0325, titled “Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study.” As an educator with extensive experience teaching at both the college and K-12 levels, as well as the former Administrative Director of the Governor’s Commission on Hispanic Affairs, I have dedicated my career to addressing the systemic inequities that impact marginalized communities. This legislation is an important step toward creating equitable opportunities for adult learners across Maryland.

Throughout my career, I have witnessed how access to education—or the lack thereof—can define a person’s ability to achieve personal and professional growth. In my current roles as an educator and the founder of Friendly Law, Inc., I have worked with individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, many of whom face unnecessary barriers to educational and career advancement due to the rigidity of current systems.

HB0325 addresses one such barrier by requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to allow individuals to complete all components of the General Educational Development (GED) Test in the language of their choice, either English or Spanish. This flexibility will enable non-native English speakers, many of whom contribute significantly to our state’s workforce, to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without the undue challenge of navigating a test in a less familiar language.

Additionally, the provision mandating a study of the feasibility and cost of offering the GED examination in additional languages reflects Maryland’s commitment to inclusivity. Expanding access to the GED Test in more languages would provide meaningful opportunities for Maryland’s diverse communities, particularly for adults who have been historically underserved by educational systems.

As the former Administrative Director of the Governor’s Commission on Hispanic Affairs, I have engaged deeply with Maryland’s Hispanic communities and am acutely aware of the challenges they face, particularly in accessing educational resources. This bill is a direct response to those

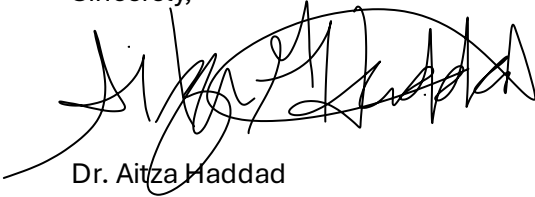
challenges, promoting equity for a growing population whose success is inextricably tied to the state's overall prosperity.

Moreover, my experience as an educator has taught me that a more inclusive approach to education benefits not just individuals but entire families and communities. When adults are empowered to earn their GEDs, they set a positive example for their children, enhance their earning potential, and strengthen the state's economy. HB0325 will create pathways for these transformations to take place.

Friendly Law, Inc., along with my work as an educator, is driven by the belief that access to education and justice is fundamental to creating a more equitable society. I urge you to support HB0325 to ensure that Maryland remains a leader in fostering opportunities for all its residents, regardless of their language or background.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. I am happy to offer any additional insights or assistance in advancing this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aitza Haddad', written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Aitza Haddad
Educator, Advocate, and Founder of Friendly Law, Inc.