

13003 Camellia Drive
Silver Spring Maryland
January 27, 2025

The Honorable Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
130 Taylor House Office Building
131 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

Favorable Support for HB 325/SB 0451

My name is Rev. Kenneth Nelson. I am a Montgomery County resident and religious educator who believes Maryland residents' educational opportunities should be encouraged and supported. I strongly support HB 325/SB 0451, which requires the Maryland Department of Labor to allow individuals to take all components of the General Educational Development (GED) Test in the same language, whether English or Spanish.

Education is the cornerstone of opportunity, and this bill removes barriers non-native English speakers face in pursuing their educational goals. Allowing the GED to be taken in one's preferred language promotes equity, workforce development, and personal empowerment. Additionally, requiring the Department to study the feasibility of offering the GED in additional languages recognizes Maryland's growing diversity and prepares the state to serve multilingual communities better.

Some may argue that offering the GED in multiple languages could discourage English learning. However, obtaining a GED is about demonstrating knowledge and skills—not language proficiency. Many individuals seeking the GED are already improving their English but need this credential to access better jobs and higher education. Offering the GED in multiple languages supports their immediate needs while allowing them to continue their English-language journey.

HB 325/SB 0451 ensures that Maryland remains inclusive and competitive by equipping all residents with the tools they need to succeed. I urge the committee to **give this bill a favorable report**.

I appreciate your consideration.



Rev. Kenneth Nelson
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