

1/29/2025

SUPPORT for HB0325 - Adult Education - High School Diploma by Examination - Requirements and Study

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I write to offer my strong support for HB035, which would increase accessibility to the General Educational Development test by providing that all components of the GED be able to be taken in either English or Spanish, and by requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to study the feasibility of offering the exam in a language other than English.

As we all know, education is the key to unlocking personal success and professional opportunities. However, under the current limitation on language options for the GED test, many whose first language is not English are greatly hindered in their ability to pursue their full potential. The bill before us today ensures a fair chance for non-English speakers- especially in diverse communities here in Maryland- to prove their knowledge and earn a high school equivalency credential by offering the full GED in both English and Spanish.

Rather than make individuals try some sort of English-language format, allowing the GED test in the individual's chosen language allows such test-takers to rise to the challenge and demonstrate their capabilities without the extra burden of wrestling with the barriers of the English language. This creates a level playing field for all Maryland residents and will go a long way in helping immigrants and non-English-speaking communities contribute to making our state a more diverse, exciting, and growing place to be.

I also strongly support the section that would provide the Department of Labor to study the costs and benefits associated with expanding the GED exam to other languages. As Maryland continues to diversify, our systems of education should reflect the linguistic and cultural realities of the population. The study and subsequent report on this matter will ensure that Maryland stays a leader in providing inclusive education during a time where fear and prejudice permeate our society. In closing, I urge to support HB035. Expanding language access to the GED test is an action toward much needed equity and opportunity for an educationally empowered citizenry in Maryland.

Thank you for your attention and consideration today.

Sincerely,

Matias Cacheiro

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