



**Testimony in FAVOR WITH AMENDMENTS of HB 807
Education - Teacher Preparation Programs –
English Language Learner Teacher Competency Requirements**

Ways and Means

February 25, 2026

Dear Honorable Chair Wilkins and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer favorable testimony with amendment in support of HB 807, Education - Teacher Preparation Programs – English Language Learner Teacher Competency Requirements. HB 807 would require a teacher preparation program (TPP) to include specific competencies related to teaching Multilingual Learners (MLs). As written, it would also require a TPP to include a certain course in teaching MLs beginning in the 2028-2029 academic year.

CASA is a national powerhouse organization building power and improving the quality of life in working-class: Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendent, Indigenous, and Immigrant communities. With a membership of over 190,000 members, CASA creates change with its power-building model blending human services, community organizing, and advocacy to serve the full spectrum of the needs, dreams, and aspirations of members. CASA provides multiple education services to youth and adult immigrants in Maryland including college and career readiness, workforce and life skills ESOL, and vocational training.

For well over a decade, Multilingual Learners have been one of the fastest-growing student population in Maryland¹. To effectively teach MLs, teachers must have awareness of the mechanics of language acquisition and know how to provide culturally responsive tiered accommodations that support both MLs' linguistic development and subject-matter learning². This is an essential skillset for all educators, not just those who are specifically licensed to work with MLs. Therefore, this bill's proposal to add more specific teacher competencies for supporting MLs to the list of required subjects covered in teacher preparation is not merely timely. It is long overdue.

¹ <https://education.umd.edu/research/centers/mep/research/k-12-education/trends-maryland-public-schools-english-language-learner#:~:text=ELLs%20represent%20one%20of%20the,serve%20this%20rapidly%20growing%20population>

² chrome-

extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://ul.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/resource/2021-12/10-Santos%20LDH%20Teacher%20Development%20FINAL.pdf

However, CASA does not believe that mandating a standalone, 3-credit course requirement is the most impactful way of ensuring all Maryland teachers are prepared to effectively meet the unique needs of our MLs. Such a mandate could unintentionally exacerbate our current teacher shortage by adding to the courseload and tuition costs of aspiring educators. It could also further perpetuate the “othering” of MLs. Instead, our Maryland teachers must understand that MLs do not engage in education through segregated instruction. They are actively enrolled in all classroom settings from pre-K through to post-secondary education. Therefore, our accredited TPPs must approach academic engagement of multilingual learners in a holistic manner with culturally responsive instructional techniques embedded throughout all required courses.

We therefore propose an amendment to strike lines 25-26 on page 2. As amended, the bill would facilitate more embedded ML-specific education in coursework and internships without creating barriers to licensure. This approach benefits all aspiring educators and their future students.

For these reasons, CASA respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report with amendment on House Bill 807.