

## CHAPTER 411

(Senate Bill 506)

AN ACT concerning

## Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland

FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on the Preservation of *Heritage* Language Skills in Maryland; providing for the membership and duties of the Task Force; ~~requiring the election~~ providing for the selection of a chair of the Task Force; requiring the State Department of Education to provide staff for the Task Force; prohibiting members of the Task Force from receiving certain compensation; authorizing a member to receive certain reimbursement; requiring the Task Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; requiring the Task Force to continue to advise the Governor and the General Assembly on certain matters until a certain time; and generally relating to the Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland.

## Preamble

WHEREAS, While it is important for new Americans to learn and master English, there is also a critical shortage of Americans proficient in languages other than English; and

WHEREAS, The need for world language skills is increasingly important in national security, defense, education, and in maintaining a competitive edge in business and trade; and

WHEREAS, The language fluency level required for success in national security and in a global economy often far exceeds that previously considered sufficient; and

WHEREAS, Since business partners in Maryland's top foreign export markets speak over a dozen different languages, including Arabic, Spanish, German, Italian, French, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, better command of those and other international trading languages is essential to furthering commerce and enhancing Maryland's economic health; and

WHEREAS, Native English speakers in traditional American academic programs generally do not study foreign languages for extensive periods; and

WHEREAS, Of those native English speakers who study the most difficult, high-interest languages, few reach the federal standard for "limited proficiency level,"