

WHEREAS, Only one in four adults with less than a high school education currently participates in any kind of education or training; and

WHEREAS, Maryland ranks near the bottom in the United States in per-student State spending on adult education; and

WHEREAS, In Maryland, there are nearly 750,000 Marylanders with limited literacy skills, no high school diploma, or ineffective English language skills in need of services; and

WHEREAS, The 2003-2004 Maryland Adult Education Score Card shows that only 3 percent to 5 percent of Marylanders in need of adult education receive it; and

WHEREAS, The adult population in need of additional education is substantially similar to those served by the workforce one-stop system; and

WHEREAS, Historically, adult education was in the sole purview of the K-12 educational system, but over the past 15 years, there has been an increasing recognition nationally that adult education and workforce development must be better linked; and

WHEREAS, There are many different State agencies involved in adult education programming for various groups, but there are insufficient systems of accountability for adult education funding and outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Employers are increasingly turning to ex-offenders to address workforce needs, and the correctional system must increase the number of people served by educational programs that lead to job opportunities upon release; and

WHEREAS, Current adult education programs in Maryland are not fully progressing students to the posthigh school skill levels necessary to be competitive in our current and future economy; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the importance of linking adult education and workforce creation, a number of states have transferred responsibility for adult education from their K-12 educational systems to state workforce development agencies; and

WHEREAS, Maryland requires an adult education system that aligns adult education, career preparation, postsecondary education, and workforce development; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows: