Letter of Support for Maryland's Lnguage Acquisition Bill

Language Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children

Fill in your information

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Email / Phone (optional): _____

[SENT VIA EMAIL]

The Honorable [FULL NAME]

Maryland [State Senate / House of Delegates]

[Office Address if desired]

Re: Support for Maryland's Language Acquisition bill (Language Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children)

Dear Senator/Delegate [LAST NAME],

I am a resident of Maryland and I live in your district. I am writing to urge you to support Maryland's language acquisition bill establishing a Language Acquisition Tracking Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children within the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Deaf, DeafBlind, DeafDisabled, and Hard of Hearing children need full, early access to language—whether signed or spoken—to thrive academically and socially. When children do not have accessible language early, the consequences can be long-lasting. Maryland can take a strong

step toward preventing language deprivation by adopting a statewide system that helps families and educators track language development and respond quickly when children are not on track.

This bill would:

- Create a no-cost statewide program to track language acquisition for eligible Deaf and Hard of Hearing children (under age 9 with an IFSP, IEP, or Section 504 plan).
- Use a language assessment tool approved by an advisory council, with families selecting whether the assessment tracks signed language acquisition or spoken language acquisition.
- Provide assessments within 6 months of diagnosis and every 6 months thereafter through age 9, administered by trained educators or assessment specialists.
- Require IFSP/IEP/504 plan updates with detailed reasons and specific supports when a child is not making progress in receptive and expressive language.
- Establish a Director at MSDE to develop milestones/benchmarks, oversee data collection and reporting, and provide professional development.
- Create a Task Force with representation from the Deaf community, parents/guardians, educators, and relevant state agencies to recommend the assessment tool.
- Publish an annual, disaggregated report on language acquisition and literacy development outcomes, beginning July 1, 2027.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to co-sponsor and vote in favor of this bill, and to encourage your colleagues to support it as well.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maryland's children and families. I would be grateful for a brief reply letting me know your position.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]