

HB 340 is currently before the House Education Committee. I am the parent of three graduates of Henrico County, Virginia's public schools, a retired educator, and a nationally-recognized leader in world languages. I am writing to ask that you oppose this bill, which clearly aims to eliminate world language courses from the advanced studies diploma.

I certainly understand offering various curricular paths for students who aspire to the advanced studies high school diploma. However, the original wording of HB 340 unnecessarily and unfairly targets world language courses that teach the essential skills of communication and cross-cultural awareness that are vital to everyone, not only in Virginia but to all Americans, to function in today's multinational and multilingual economy regardless of their chosen profession.

Representatives of the Foreign Language Association of Virginia expressed their concerns to Delegate Davis, who offered a substitute HB 340. Unfortunately, this draft of the bill sets up a direct opposition between world languages and career and technical education by creating two advanced diplomas— one with no world language requirement and another with no career and technical education requirement. Such a choice is odd and quite unacceptable. Virginia's citizens now work in myriad careers in a multilingual, multicultural society that deals in and with a global economy. Our current and future students will be graduated into the same everchanging multilingual and multicultural society and the continually expanding global economy. Career and technical education is not in opposition to world languages; the two disciplines can and indeed must work together to prepare career-ready, functional global citizens.

HB 340 is not needed. Governor Youngkin has talked extensively about "reestablishing expectations of excellence" in public education. By lowering the standards for the advanced diploma through HB 340, the forced choice of either world languages or career and technical training to attain the advanced diploma contradicts his goal and completely ignores the value that world languages contribute to contributing citizens in today's world.

I ask that you oppose HB 340. Thank you.

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