

Lily Luby
Regarding House Finance Committee
May 12, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Lily Luby and I am a rising sophomore at Brown University studying International and Public Affairs and French and Francophone Studies as well as a member of the Multilingual Education Team of Brown Initiative for Policy. I write to testify in favor of House Bills 5744 and 5982, which would support dual language education investments in the state of Rhode Island.

While I am a student at Brown University, I hail from Glastonbury, Connecticut, where bilingual education is a priority of the public school district. Not only is the town home to a significant Spanish-speaking population, as is Providence and much of Rhode Island, but students have numerous language opportunities throughout their education. My peers and I learned Spanish alongside English until middle school, when I elected to take French and Latin. I proudly earned the Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy in both languages. I credit my exposure to this multilingual education as the driving force behind my concentrations at Brown in international affairs and the French language.

Having been exposed to many languages over the course of my primary education, I recognize how important the understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures is to a developing mind. In my peers who study languages alongside me, I see and am consistently inspired by their unique perspectives and creativity fostered by Spanish, French, Portuguese, and German, some of the most prominent fields of language study at Brown.

The Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act would provide dual language programs primarily to students with non-English first languages, allowing them to assimilate into American culture through the development of English skills while still building and maintaining proficiency in their first language. As the bill cites, overwhelming evidence exists that the state of Rhode Island could expect large returns on investment in bilingual education programs for students, and that these programs would help Rhode Island progress toward its goals of educational equity and grade-level reading ability by the third grade.

At a time when global affairs are fragile and nuanced, fostering a generation of multilingual learners who are able to communicate and engage with other cultures is profoundly necessary, not only for the state of Rhode Island, but for the nation. Rhode Island is in a unique position to do so, with up to 16% of students speaking more than one language. In order to remain at the forefront of inclusive, modern public education, Rhode Island should approve these bills in support of dual language education. Thank you for your time and consideration.