

May 15, 2025

Members of House Finance Committee:

I am writing to you as a Council Member and resident of the City of Central Falls to express my strong support for the resolution to expand the Dual Language bilingual program across the State of Rhode Island (Bill H5744- Bilingual, dual language, World Language Teacher Investment Act) . As an elected official and active member of a diverse and multicultural community, I have witnessed firsthand the positive impact this program has on the academic, emotional, and social development of our students. In Central Falls, the Dual Language program not only fosters proficiency in two languages, but also empowers children with the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly global and interconnected society. The ability to acquire academic proficiency in both English and Spanish opens doors in the job market, strengthens intergenerational communication in immigrant families, and deepens a sense of identity and cultural belonging. I had the honor of recently visiting the classroom of Ms. Martínez, a first-grade teacher at Raíces Dual Language Academy in Central Falls. Her dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment to her students are a testament to the transformative power of this program. What I witnessed in that classroom was more than just bilingual education-it was a living example of inclusion, equity, and academic excellence. For all these reasons, I respectfully but strongly urge state legislators and educational leaders to support this resolution. Expanding the Dual Language program across Rhode Island represents a strategic investment in our shared future. Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter. I remain available to discuss further how we can continue to strengthen bilingual education throughout our state.

Best,

Alberto Rivas – Lugo

Councilmember, City of Central Falls