

Angel's Testimony in Support of House Bills 5744 and 5982

Dear Chairman Abney and House Finance Committee Members,

My name is Angel Lopez, and I am writing in strong support of House Bills 5744 and 5982.

During my childhood in Providence, I remember speaking 90% Spanish in my household and speaking 90% English everywhere else. That reality enabled me to think in two languages for as long as I can remember. My only formal exposure to learning how to read and write in Spanish came during grades 9 through 12 at Mount Pleasant High School. For the record, I passed out of the foreign language curriculum requirement at Boston College due to my high Language SAT Score. I owe credit to my parents and family elders, and I also owe a substantial chunk of the credit to my three Spanish teachers at Mount Pleasant. I support House Bills 5744 and 5982 because both are about investing directly in a segment of education that has positive impacts on the Rhode Island economy.

The diversity of language and the care for community present in this state has already brought interpretation services inside medical facilities and courts. Dual language speakers have also made their way into banks, check-out counters, and social work; stimulating economic gains for a variety of businesses.

Most teachers are W-2 workers who contribute income, unemployment, and TDI withholding to the state. The passage of both bills is necessary for the economy of Rhode Island as it will enable a new and next generation of workers to access permanent and part-time work and enable RI businesses to access new market segments on a local and global level. Approving both bills is a way of keeping and attracting talent to Rhode Island, diversifying the workforce, and enabling economic opportunities in education, entertainment, food, arts and culture, STEM, and the hospitality and tourism industries across our State.

Vote Yes for House Bill 5744 and 5982.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Angel Lopez
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