



Second Floor,
225 Dyer Street
Providence RI 02906

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Carlon Howard, and I am writing in strong support of House Bills No. 5744 and 5982. I am the Chief Impact Officer and Co-Founder of the Equity Institute in Providence, RI, and I care deeply about these bills.

I support this legislation because my organization, the Equity Institute, is dedicated to creating a more diverse and equitable educator workforce. We work tirelessly to help school support professionals, many of whom are multilingual individuals from the communities these bills seek to serve, become certified classroom educators. I have witnessed firsthand the immense talent and potential within our multilingual communities and the significant barriers these aspiring educators face in obtaining certification. These bills offer a crucial pathway to harness that talent for the benefit of all Rhode Island students.

This bill matters because:

- **Bilingual programs help all students succeed.** Research shows that dual language programs lead to stronger academic outcomes—not only for multilingual learners, but also for English-dominant students. These programs close achievement gaps and promote advanced learning in two languages.
- **Multilingualism is key to Rhode Island's future workforce.** More than 90% of employers seek workers with language skills. Investing in bilingual education prepares students for real-world careers, supports business development, and strengthens the state's economy.
- **It promotes equity and addresses teacher shortages.** Multilingual learners in Rhode Island are primarily located in under-resourced



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districts. This bill expands access to high-quality programs in those communities and helps build a pipeline of qualified bilingual educators by removing certification barriers. This directly aligns with our mission at the Equity Institute, as it will enable more passionate and capable multilingual individuals to enter the teaching profession, enriching our schools and providing students with relatable role models.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill and invest in the academic success, workforce readiness, and equitable opportunities of Rhode Island's multilingual students.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlon Howard', written over a large, faint, circular watermark of the Equity Institute logo.

Carlon Howard
Chief Impact Officer and Co-Founder
Equity Institute