

Dear Senate and House Finance Committee Members,

I'm Dr. Jillian Belanger and I am writing in support of House/Senate Bill No. H5744/S785. I am a parent of a high school student in East Providence and I am the Multilingual Coordinator for Cumberland Public Schools. Prior to taking on this role, I worked in Providence schools for 17 years.

I care about this because I have seen firsthand how students thrive when provided opportunities to continue learning in multiple languages.

This bill matters because it promotes equity. Over 40% of students in urban districts speak a language other than English at home. We need teachers who understand our communities and can help all students succeed, no matter their background.

It also strengthens our economy. Rhode Island needs bilingual workers. This bill invests in future educators who will prepare students with the language skills employers are already demanding.

Finally, it supports excellence. Bilingual education and world language programs lead to better academic results, stronger critical thinking, and global readiness. We need more teachers to expand these opportunities.

Please support this bill and invest in the success of our educators. Thank you for your time and for your dedication to the people of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jillian Belanger