

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Evie, and I'm writing in **strong support** of House Bills No. 5744 and 5982. I am a student and community member in Providence, and I care deeply about these bills.

I support this legislation because language is one of the most powerful tools any person can have. Students need these programs in order to succeed and communicate with one another. This is a necessity.

These bills matter 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 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.

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I respectfully urge you to support these bills and invest in Rhode Island's multilingual future.

Thank you,
Evie Dumont