

May 15, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Monique Jacob, and I am writing to strongly support House Bills No. 5744 and 5982.

I am a retired Principal of an elementary Dual Language school in Pawtucket, RI, and an adjunct professor at Rhode Island College in the department of Educational Studies. I care deeply about these bills.

I support this legislation because I saw firsthand English and Spanish-speaking students benefit from a bilingual education. I am also a language learner. Growing up on the South Shore of Montréal, Québec, I learned French and English simultaneously. I also learned German to communicate with my grandparents and Spanish to communicate with my students' parents. I believe it is a gift and a privilege to speak more than one language.

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 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.

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,

Monique Jacob, Ed.D.