

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Niurka Ferreira, and I am writing in strong support of House Bills No. H5744 and H5982. I am a Spanish Teacher from Providence, and I care deeply about these bills.

I support this legislation because I work with multilingual students who deserve greater access to high quality, culturally affirming education. I believe that language is a strength not a barrier and that all students benefit when we embrace linguistic diversity.

This bill matters because:

- **Bilingual programs help all students succeed.** Research shows that dual language programs lead to stronger academic outcomes for both multilingual and English-dominant students. These programs promote advanced learning, bilingualism, and close opportunity gaps.
- **Multilingualism is key to Rhode Island's future workforce.** Over 90% of employers value employees with language skills. Investing in bilingual education supports our economy and prepares students for success in a global job market.
- **It promotes equity and addresses teacher shortages.** Multilingual learners are often concentrated in under-resourced districts. These bills remove barriers to certification and help create a pipeline of bilingual educators who reflect and represent their communities.

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,
Niurka Alba Ferreira