

Dear Chairman Abney & Chairman DiPalma and Committee Members:

I'm Aubrey Schabowsky and I am writing in support of House Bill No. H5982 and Senate Bill No. S457. I am a parent, educator and community member from North Kingstown RI.

I care about this because I work with paraprofessionals pursuing teacher certification (many of whom are bi/ multilingual themselves) who are incredibly dedicated to meeting the needs of the bi/multilingual student population. Currently, our workforce is woefully unprepared to meet these student needs and we must do better for the young people in our state and for the educators dedicating their lives to helping our young people thrive.

This bill matters because:

- **Bilingual programs help all students succeed.** Research shows that dual language programs lead to stronger academic outcomes—not just for multilingual learners, but for English-dominant students too. These programs close achievement gaps and promote high-level learning in two languages.
- **Multilingualism is key to Rhode Island's future workforce.** Over 90% of employers seek workers with language skills. Investing in bilingual education prepares students for real-world careers, attracts businesses, and strengthens the state's economy.
- **It supports equity and addresses teacher shortages.** The majority of multilingual learners in RI are concentrated in under-resourced districts. This bill helps expand programs in those communities while also building a pipeline of qualified bilingual educators by removing barriers to certification.

Please support this bill and invest in the success of our multilingual students. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Aubrey Schabowsky