

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Danielle Dennis, and I am writing in strong support of House Bills No. 5744 and 5982. I am a community member from South Kingstown, and I care deeply about these bills.

I support this legislation because I am a subject matter expert that believes our multilingual learners deserve greater academic resources that will allow them to thrive in our communities.

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,

Danielle V. Dennis

South Kingstown, Rhode Island