

May 14, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Laura Faria Tancinco. As the Coordinator of Project ExCEL at Rhode Island College (an academic support program for bilingual and multilingual students at RIC). I am writing in strong support of House Bills No. 5744 and 5982. I am a staff member at RIC from Lincoln, RI and I care deeply about these bills.

I support this legislation because I work with multilingual learners (MLLs) who deserve better support. The multilingual students that I support at RIC are incredibly talented – in and out of the classroom. Their talent is not “despite” their multilingualism, but “because of” their multilingualism. MLLs deserve education that is proven to be beneficial to their cognitive growth – in languages beyond English. Traditional educational methods just don’t work today and have proven to be detrimental to MLLs. Essentially erasing and whitewashing their entire identity. With intentional efforts to strengthen bilingual and pedagogically sound educational practices, we can nurture, properly educate and raise up MLLs. Embracing their entire cultural and linguistic identity, for MLLs to not just survive but thrive in school, in their community and in Rhode Island.

It is my pleasure to serve and support MLLs at RIC. They enrich the educational landscape at RIC as well as the entire Rhode Island community.

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,  
Laura Faria Tancinco