

Dear Chairman Abney and Finance Committee Members,

My name is Rebecca Hobin, and I am a World Language teacher in the Cranston Public School District as well as the Advocacy Chair for the Rhode Island for Languages Association (RIFLA). I am writing to strongly urge you to support both **H5744 The Bilingual Dual Language as well as H5982 The World Language Teachers Investment Act**. As a language educator myself who has personally experienced the challenges of entering this field, I can attest to the urgent need for this legislation—not just for teachers like me, but for the students and communities we serve across Rhode Island.

My own journey into teaching Spanish was not straightforward. I graduated college in 2021 with my bachelor's degree in Spanish and shortly thereafter entered the World Language classroom through emergency certification. While I was very fortunate to secure a full-time teaching job in the Cranston Public School district, my process to certification was incredibly taxing both financially and emotionally. I invested thousands of dollars—out-of-pocket—to meet certification requirements, complete necessary coursework, and secure the credentials I needed, all while balancing my overwhelming teaching load.

The process of becoming a fully certified Spanish teacher in this state was incredibly stressful—even for me, a 22-year-old who had the privilege of living at home while paying for school. I often think about how much harder it would be for qualified aspiring educators who have families and greater responsibilities. Without meaningful support, many passionate and capable educators are simply unable to pursue this path. We need to make it easier, not harder, to bring talented language teachers into our classrooms.

Now that I am a fully certified teacher serving in my role, I see firsthand the incredible demand for high-quality language instruction. Students are eager to learn languages, families value the cultural connections we bring to the classroom, and schools are increasingly recognizing the academic and social/emotional benefits that multilingual education provides.

Rhode Island is a multilingual state. We are home to diverse communities where so many languages are spoken beyond English, and where students bring rich cultural and linguistic assets to our schools. Our state's new two-year world language graduation requirement reflects a commitment to preparing students for a global society. But this requirement—and the promise of true equity in education—cannot be upheld without a strategic investment in recruiting, supporting, and retaining world language and bilingual teachers.

The Bilingual Dual Language and World Language Teachers Investment Act is a crucial step toward building a sustainable pipeline of educators who can meet this need. It addresses the structural and financial barriers that many aspiring teachers—especially those from multilingual backgrounds—face. It ensures that Rhode Island not only maintains its world language requirement but elevates the quality and reach of its

language programs. I am urging you to please pass these two bills to support our multilingual learners and educators across the State of Rhode Island. By passing these Acts, you are not just investing in teachers—you are investing in students, in families, and in the future of Rhode Island.

I urge you to vote in favor of this vital legislation.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Hobin