

Dear members of the RI House Finance Committee,

I am writing in strong support of bill [H5744- The Bilingual Dual Language and World Language Teachers Investment Act.](#)

I urge you to support a sustainable teacher pipeline by investing in candidates who reflect our student population who are seeking bilingual, dual language or world language certification. We need teachers to whom students can relate, look up to, get guidance from, whom they trust because they are one of theirs. We have a teacher crisis in RI and this bill suggests a viable and logical solution. Give these willing candidates a chance to access teacher education so they can unfold their assets. Funding scholarships for those teacher candidates from underrepresented groups will go a long way to help them succeed. In turn, they will commit to teaching in an urban core/ring school for one year. You can't ask for a better return on investment!

And I am writing in the strongest support of bill [H5982- The Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act](#)

I am the Executive Director of the [International Engineering Program](#) (IEP) through which students can pursue a simultaneous degree in an engineering discipline and in a second language, and then study and intern abroad for a full year honing both skill sets. This 38 year old program whose mission is to educate the global engineer is a jewel in RI and prepares its students for the interconnected workplace. We especially value students coming to campus who already have near fluency in a second language. They can then either leverage this gift and take the higher level classes and go abroad at a very high proficiency level hitting the ground running when immersing in a new culture and work culture; or they have an advantage picking up a 3rd foreign language. Research has shown that bilingual education makes kids smarter as they need to abstract from one lens through which they see the world and navigate different perspectives. My own sons went to bilingual immersion schools and I am convinced that their academic success - with one attending Hobart & William Smith college and the other son Yale University would not have happened without the formation they received in their bilingual immersion school. While the International Engineering Program attracts a good percentage of students from out-of-state, we are striving to increase the instate participation and definitely hope that you consider financing incentives for schools to start, expand, and improve K-12 dual language programs! These will create the pipeline of global professionals we are educating here at URI through the IEP! Our graduates are now working for numerous RI companies with global footprints who strongly value their second language skills and cultural intelligence, e.g. Dassault Systems, FM Global, Hasbro, Hexagon, Infineon, Mahr, Marle Group, Supfina, TeknorApex, Toray, Viessman, Windmoeller & Hoelscher. These programs are cost neutral once implemented but require up-front materials and professional development.

Thank you for your consideration to fund both bills!

Sigrid

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[IEP website](#)

[IEP Facebook](#)

[Personal Zoom Room](#)

<https://germanaturi.com/berka> (appointments for GIEP)

[Starfish appointments](#) (appointments for CIEP/other students)