

2/12/26

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing to express my strong support for Joint Resolution H7011, which appropriates funding for the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program (RIAOP). I respectfully urge the Committee to consider that this funding be provided in a manner that allows for the RIAOP to continue receiving annual support beyond the 2026-2027 school year.

The Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program is a crucial statewide educational program whose mission is “To prepare children with hearing loss for an education in their community schools by providing them with the tools they will need for successful inclusion and achievement [while striving] to empower their families with the knowledge and confidence necessary to support their children in their lifelong journeys.”

As a parent and community stakeholder, I have seen firsthand the meaningful impact this Program has on children and families across Rhode Island. I was the parent who brought the initial grant to the Rhode Island Department of Education because I was desperate to return to RI after having travel 4 hours per day to educate my daughter in an auditory oral learning environment to focused in spoken language. This program has changed the lives of many children in their educational journey.

This funding will directly support the Program’s mission of supporting families who choose a spoken language modality for their children and allow it to continue delivering high-quality services that are not readily available elsewhere in the state.

I respectfully urge you to support this resolution and approve the proposed appropriation to the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program.

Sincerely,

Iraida Williams

Parent

Johnston RI

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