

February 27, 2026

To: House Committee on Finance

Attention: Chair Marvin Abney

Subject: SUPPORT of H7011 - Making an Appropriation to the RI Auditory Oral Program

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 ensure this funding is provided in a manner that allows for stable, annual support beyond the 2026-2027 school year to avoid the uncertainty that currently surrounds student placement and services.

As a seasoned Speech-Language Pathologist with approximately 15 years of experience, I currently serve students both as a full-time employee within a school district and as the owner of **Acorn Therapy Solutions™** in North Kingstown. My professional background also includes extensive work in Early Intervention, where I saw firsthand the tremendous support provided to families through programs similar to and specific to the auditory-oral approach.

The RIAOP is a crucial statewide program that prepares children with hearing loss for success in their community schools by providing them with the essential tools for inclusion. In my experience across both the public and private sectors, this program allows families to be fully immersed in support—not just within the school system, but in the community at large. This level of immersion is monumental to a child's development; the loss of such a specialized program would be truly detrimental to Rhode Island families.

Furthermore, I urge you to consider the current inequity of services available to students with hearing loss in our state. While the RI School for the Deaf is state-funded, the educational option for students who use spoken language currently requires tuition. Stable funding for the RIAOP would help bridge this gap and ensure high-quality services remain available for families who choose a spoken language modality.

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

Sincerely,

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