

April 26, 2026

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 the RIAOP to receive sustained annual support beyond the 2026-2027 school year.

The RIAOP is a vital statewide resource whose mission is to prepare children with hearing loss for successful inclusion in their community schools. Having grown up with a mother who is an Auditory Oral Teacher of the Deaf, I have had a unique vantage point on this program's impact. By attending community events with her over the years, I have seen firsthand that the RIAOP does far more than teach children to listen and talk; it empowers them with the confidence to advocate for themselves and the communication tools necessary to participate fully in their communities.

Protecting this funding means protecting the future of every child who walks through the RIAOP's doors. It ensures they will have the voice to pursue their dreams and provides families who choose a spoken language modality with 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,

Leah Rosendale
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