

April 28, 2026

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 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 an optometrist practicing in Rhode Island, I care for children whose development depends on the integration of multiple sensory systems. While my work focuses on vision, I have seen firsthand how essential hearing and language development are to a child’s ability to learn, communicate, and engage with the world around them. Patients who have access to appropriate auditory services demonstrate stronger academic readiness, improved communication skills, and greater confidence in both school and social settings. Programs like RIAOP play a vital role in making these outcomes possible.

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,

Liane Prytula, OD
Acuity Vision & Eyewear Center
Coventry, RI