

Chris O'Brien

From: Lynn Rich <lrch04@cox.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 3:23 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Abney, Marvin L.; Rep. Slater, Scott; Rep. Marszalkowski, Alex; Rep. Alzate, Karen; Rep. Baginski, Jacquelyn M.; Rep. Biah, Nathan W.; Rep. Cortvriend, Terri-Denise; Rep. Diaz, Grace; Rep. Edwards, John G.; Rep. Finkelman, Alex S.; Rep. Hull, Raymond A.; Rep. Nardone, George A.; Rep. O'Brien, William W.; Rep. Roberts, Sherry; Rep. Tanzi, Teresa A.
Subject: SUPPORT of H7011 - Making an Appropriation to the RI Auditory Oral Program

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April 28, 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 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 former teacher assistant in the program, I have seen firsthand the meaningful impact this AOP Program has on children and families across Rhode Island. I am a first hand witness to the amazing work this program's staff does. People may think (as I did before being a part of the program) that a child receives a hearing aide and/or a cochlear implant and that is the end of it - they are hearing and speaking. It is far from that, receiving their hearing aide device whichever it is just the beginning of the process. They must learn to listen, speak and understand with their new aide/implant. It is a slow and steady growth over time. This program gets the children to learn all they need to to be successful listeners/speakers and students. It is not something that can be found in an ordinary school day without the program helping the children first. Along with supporting the children they also support the families as they navigate this new world with their child. 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,
Lynn Rich

Former AOP TA
Smithfield, RI

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