

H7011 - PRO

Dear Chairman Abney and members of the Rhode Island House Finance Committee,

My name is Kathleen Gentile, I reside in Cranston, Rhode Island and have been working with students enrolled in the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program (RIAOP) as a teaching assistant for 14 years. I am writing in support of **H7011: Making an Appropriation to the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program.**

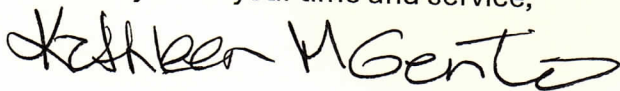
I appreciate the opportunity to express how important this appropriation is for the future of auditory oral instruction. There are many Rhode Island residents who are deaf or hard of hearing who have benefited and continue to benefit from the learning modalities only available through RIAOP. Students who use hearing technology such as cochlear implants and/or hearing aids and have chosen to utilize spoken communication are provided with education services from Auditory Oral Teachers of the Deaf, and Auditory Oral Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists.

Over the past 14 years I have witnessed students enter school at the age of 3 with limited oral language abilities to go on to learn and thrive because of the unique program provided to them only through RIAOP. The goal for each student is to help them maximize their potential from small classroom instruction to mainstreaming and then for each student to be able to return to their home school district with RIAOP providing outreach services.

This service provided through the RI Auditory Oral Program provides equitable access to education for many Deaf and Hard of Hearing students who along with their parents have chosen an oral language mode of communication. Without this funding this educational opportunity will cease to exist.

I sincerely ask that you approve **H7011: Making an Appropriation to the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program** which will continue to provide an equitable approach to the specialized educational services that Deaf and Hard of Hearing students utilizing hearing technologies need.

Thank you for your time and service,



Kathleen M. Gentile

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