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Finance Committee Chair
Representative Marvin Abney
RI General Assembly
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

February 20, 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 vigorously urge the Committee to consider that this funding be provided in a manner that allows 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 Social Worker who has worked for 40 plus years in human services, I have witnessed the powerful and positive impact that educational programs like RIAOP have had in the lives of children with disabilities. These programs enable children with hearing impairment to thrive and develop independence which sets the foundation for them to achieve and create an adult life which benefits all of our society. Do not abandon the children and families in the state of RI who have come to rely on this educational service which supports intellectual and socioemotional development.