

April 1, 2026

Dear Chair Marvin Abney and Members of the House Committee of 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 aunt to my niece Nairobi “Saffy” Castillo, I have seen firsthand the meaningful impact this program has on children and families across Rhode Island. When Saffy first began, her ability to communicate was limited. Today, she confidently expresses herself and has formed meaningful relationships with both family and friends. She brings joy into every room she enters which is a reflection to the skills and support she has gained through RIAOP. Beyond her individual growth, Saffy has also found a community where she feels a true sense of belonging. Through this program, she is receiving an education that serves as a strong foundation for her future success.

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,

Stacy Dubois
Warwick, RI