

Dear Chair Marvin Abney,

I expect you will be receiving dozens of these messages today, so please allow me a minute to explain why someone from California cares about this issue. I am writing as a former resident of Providence and a father who is considering moving his family from California to Rhode Island. The work RISPE is doing plays a critical role in creating the education system I'd like my children to grow up in. With that in mind, I am writing to express my strong support for state funding for the Rhode Island School for Progressive Education (RISPE) through **H8355**. Rhode Island continues to face critical shortages of well-prepared educators, particularly in multilingual learner (MLL) instruction, special education, and elementary classrooms. These gaps disproportionately impact students who rely most on access to skilled, highly trained teachers to succeed.

RISPE is addressing this challenge directly. Through its targeted programming in TESOL, MLL endorsement, special education, and elementary education, RISPE is preparing educators with the knowledge and tools needed to deliver high-quality, culturally relevant instruction. This work is grounded in real partnerships with schools and districts and is already making a meaningful difference in classrooms across our state.

H8355 represents a strategic and timely investment in a solution that is working. With sustained state funding, RISPE can expand its reach, strengthen its programming, and prepare more educators to meet Rhode Island's most pressing workforce needs. Without this investment, opportunities to grow this pipeline—and to better serve our students—will remain limited.

I urge you to support H8355 and invest in RISPE's proven approach to educator preparation. Doing so will help ensure that all Rhode Island students, especially those with the greatest needs, have access to excellent teaching and the opportunities they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Francis Gonzales

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