



*Defending Democracy. Empowering Voters.*

**Written Testimony Submitted in Support of (H7389/S2555)  
Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act**

Honorable Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island, I write in strong support of the SABE Act and its commitment to expanding bilingual and dual language education opportunities for students across our state.

The League believes that a strong democracy depends upon equitable access to high-quality public education and meaningful opportunities for civic and economic participation. Rhode Island's growing multilingual population is one of our state's greatest strengths, and the SABE Act represents an important investment in ensuring that all students can thrive academically, culturally, and economically.

The SABE Act moves Rhode Island from aspiration to action by creating stable, recurring funding to support dual language programs and strengthen the pipeline of bilingual educators. We are particularly encouraged by the bill's recognition that multilingual learners deserve sustained institutional support, not temporary or piecemeal solutions.

Research consistently demonstrates that dual language programs improve educational outcomes for multilingual learners while also benefiting monolingual students through enhanced academic achievement, cultural competency, attendance, and graduation rates. At a time when only a small percentage of Rhode Island's multilingual learners have access to these programs, expanded investment is both timely and necessary.

The League also strongly supports the bill's emphasis on educator workforce development. Rhode Island cannot expand high-quality bilingual education without investing in teachers. By supporting certification pathways, reducing barriers to entry, and encouraging partnerships among school districts, higher education institutions, and community organizations, the SABE Act addresses one of the most significant challenges facing our schools.

Importantly, this legislation recognizes multilingualism as both an educational opportunity and an economic and civic asset. Rhode Island's future workforce will increasingly require multilingual and multicultural competence, and our state's long-term vitality depends upon preparing students to succeed in a globally connected world.

The League of Women Voters of Rhode Island urges the committee to support passage of the SABE Act.

Gene Thompson-Grove  
President  
League of Women Voters of Rhode Island