

Hi government friends,

My name is Jillian Belanger and I'm the Multilingual Coordinator for Cumberland Public Schools. I'm writing in strong support of bill H7389 and I'm urging you to support the bill as well.

Many people may not realize that Cumberland is considered a "high incidence district," with about 300 active MLLs, or 6% of our total student population. It's important for our students to have teachers who look and talk and think like they do, and the Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act helps address the teacher shortage by removing financial barriers for qualified bilingual educators.

The act would also expand access to high-quality bilingual and dual-language programs for all students, and we know that being multilingual is a benefit that far extends beyond our students' time in schools. It is a lifelong benefit that we, as adults making decisions, can help make more possible for them.

Thank you for the work that you do and for hearing, considering, and hopefully supporting this important bill for our state's students and educators.

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