



## Testimony Requesting a New Version of H 7389: Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act

May 12, 2026

To: House Finance Committee

On behalf of the Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools, **I am writing to request that H 7389, the Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act, be amended so that funds would be available to all public schools.**

The League supports the bill's goal of increasing resources for dual language programming and providing resources to prepare and certify more dual language and world language educators. These additional resources would help address current programming gaps and educator shortages.

At the same time, we must respectfully oppose H 7389 as drafted. The bill limits eligibility to traditional public school districts, or to organizations partnered with traditional public school districts. That means charter public schools are excluded from direct access to these resources, even though charter public schools are tuition-free public schools serving large percentages of multilingual students and families.

That exclusion is inequitable. It also creates an uneven and unfair system by expanding opportunities for some schools while excluding charter public schools. Twenty-six percent of charter public school students statewide are multilingual learners. Charter public schools should be able to apply for grant funds like all other public schools, and funds should be allocated based on criteria set by the Rhode Island Department of Education that include the quality of the application and the capacity of the applicant.

We urge the committee to amend H 7389 so charter public schools are included in the bilingual dual language grant opportunities and teacher training supports that would be created by this act.

Thank you for your consideration and continued commitment to the children and families of Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lauren K. B. Matlach".

Lauren K. B. Matlach  
Deputy Director  
Rhode Island League of Charter Public Schools