

Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

My name is Cindy Miranda, and I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 2555, the Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act.

As Rhode Island continues to grow as an increasingly international and diverse region, we must make multilingualism a priority. With major global events like the FIFA World Cup expected to bring thousands of international visitors to our region, we need to ask ourselves: are we truly prepared to welcome and support people from around the world?

From hospitality and tourism to healthcare and education, multilingual skills are no longer optional — they are essential. Through conversations with World Cup partners and reviewing welcoming materials being prepared in cities like Boston and Providence, one thing has become very clear: multilingualism matters. We need people who can help families, visitors, and communities navigate systems, access services, and feel welcomed.

At the same time, Rhode Island is facing teacher shortages and growing numbers of multilingual learners in our schools. The SABE Act is an opportunity to invest in solutions that already exist within our communities. We have untapped talent across our state — including multilingual adults with degrees, credentials, and professional experience from other countries right here in Rhode Island who are ready to work, contribute, and help fill critical workforce gaps, especially in education.

We have seen the data. We know bilingual and dual language programs benefit all students, both multilingual learners and English-dominant students alike. Students in these programs often perform better academically, develop stronger communication skills, and are better prepared for the global workforce.

I have personally seen the power that learning another language can have. Because I had the opportunity to learn how to read and write in Spanish at Classical High School, doors opened for me that otherwise would not have existed. Language skills create connection, opportunity, and economic mobility.

Rhode Island cannot afford to wait any longer. Investing in multilingual education is an investment in our students, our workforce, and our future.

I respectfully urge you to support the SABE Act and help build a stronger, more prepared Rhode Island for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cindy Miranda

Providence, Rhode Island