



May 19, 2026

Dear Chairman DiPalma and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

On behalf of Rhode Island Teachers of English Language Learners (RITELL), we are writing to support Senate Bill 2555, the Support and Access to Bilingual Education (SABE) Act. RITELL is a non-profit organization that supports teachers of multilingual learners and has the mission to develop, maintain and promote professional expertise in English language teaching for speakers of other languages in Rhode Island. As an organization of teachers, we are committed to implementing research-based practices to holistically support our students and families.

RITELL supports SB-2555 because this act would serve to address a current shortage of multilingual teachers in our schools. While many teachers work to support students' heritage languages, we are in dire need of more colleagues who represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of our students. Many of our teachers work alongside bilingual and multilingual staff members and/or family members who would bring tremendous assets to the classroom if given support to seek state licensure. By expanding teacher certification pathways for bi/multilingual undergraduates and adults interested in becoming bilingual / dual language and world language educators at schools in the urban core, SB-2555 sends a powerful message to our community that we value their languages as assets and we are ready to support their pathway to the classroom.

Additionally, RITELL supports SB-2555 because it aligns with RIDE's goal, outlined in the *Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learner Success*, to "expand bilingual services and dual language programs pre-K–12 in districts." Decades of research on dual language education (Ascenzi-Moreno, 2024) and clearly delineate positive academic, linguistic, and sociocultural competency outcomes for all students, English learners and monolingual English speakers alike (García et al., 2024). Rhode Island is uniquely situated as a small state to make impactful strides toward goals of bilingualism and biliteracy for all students. In order to expand and build new dual language programs, it is imperative that bilingual/bicultural individuals are supported and trained to become educators in the dual language model. Passage of SB-2555 is a crucial step in this process.

We urge your action in this important investment in the economic future of Rhode Island. Thank you.

Sincerely,

RITELL Coordinating Council 2026

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References

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García, O., Alfaro, C., & Freire, J. (2024). Theoretical foundations of dual language-bilingual education. *The Handbook of Dual Language Bilingual Education*, ed. by J. Freire, C. Alfaro and E. de Jong (pp. 13-32). Routledge.