

Tuesday May 19th 2026

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

I am writing to express my strong support for Joint Resolution S3083, which appropriates funding for the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program (RIAOP). I respectfully urge the Committee to ensure that this funding is structured in a way that allows RIAOP to continue receiving annual support beyond the 2026–2027 school year.

This issue is deeply personal to my family. My son, Dylan Harris, is nine years old and has genetic hearing loss. RIAOP has played a critical role in his ability to access language, communication, and education. Continued, stable funding is essential not only for Dylan’s progress, but for the many Rhode Island children who rely on auditory-oral education to reach their full potential.

Sustained investment in RIAOP ensures that children with hearing loss can continue to learn, thrive, and participate fully in their communities. I respectfully ask the Committee to consider the long-term impact of this program and to support ongoing annual funding.

As a parent of a child served by the RIAOP, I’ve seen firsthand the meaningful impact this program has on children and families across Rhode Island. My son, Dylan, has access to classroom technology that allows him to hear his teacher’s instructions clearly while remaining with his peers for many of his lessons. This funding directly supports the program’s mission to empower families who choose a spoken-language modality for their children, ensuring that RIAOP can continue providing high-quality services that are not readily available anywhere else in the state.

I respectfully urge you to support this resolution and approve the proposed appropriation to the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program.

Respectfully,

Daniel Harris

Parent of Dylan Harris who relies on RIAOP

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