

May 19, 2026

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

I am writing to express my strongest support for Joint Resolution S3083 and respectfully urge the Committee to approve continued funding for the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program (RIAOP) beyond the 2026–2027 school year.

Our daughter, Asa, is one of the children whose life and future depend on programs like RIAOP. As parents, all we want is for our child to have the same opportunities as every other child — the opportunity to communicate, learn, thrive in school, build friendships, and grow into an independent and successful adult. RIAOP has helped make that possible for our family.

The Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program provides specialized education and support that simply cannot be easily replaced elsewhere in our state. Through this program, children with hearing loss are given the tools they need to succeed in their community schools and participate fully alongside their peers. Just as importantly, families are empowered with the guidance, education, and support necessary to help their children succeed throughout their lives.

For families like ours, this funding is not just about a program — it is about our child's future. Parents of children with hearing loss should not have to live in fear wondering whether their child will continue to have access to the education and services they need to succeed. We should not have to question whether our daughter will continue to have the right to an equal education simply because critical funding was not secured.

The impact of this program reaches far beyond academics. It gives children confidence, connection, independence, and the ability to fully participate in the world around them. It gives families hope.

Please support Joint Resolution S3083 and ensure that the Rhode Island Auditory Oral Program can continue serving children and families across Rhode Island for years to come.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to Rhode Island's children.

Sincerely,

Megan & Evan Thayer

Parents of Asa

Chepachet, RI