

May 19, 2026

Chairman Louis P. DiPalma
Senate Finance Committee

Dear Chairman DiPalma,

As a special educator in North Kingstown, I have worked with students with hearing loss, and the support provided by the RI Auditory Oral Program has been essential in helping those students succeed. Their expertise and specialized knowledge are truly second to none and are not something that educators in public school settings typically have access to on their own.

The services and guidance provided by RIAOP help ensure that students with hearing loss receive the support they need to fully access their education and reach their potential. Stable, consistent funding is critical so that families and school teams do not face uncertainty from year to year regarding placements and services. I strongly support this bill because it helps ensure equitable access to high-quality services for students with hearing loss across Rhode Island.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Rhode Island students and families.

Sincerely,
Sydney Sweeney

RISE Special Educator
North Kingstown High School