

May 14, 2024

TO: Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee
SUPPORT FOR: **House Bill No. 7594**

Dear Chair Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee:

My name is Fatima Martin and I am writing in support of House Bill No. **7594, the Bilingual, Dual Language, and World Language Teachers Investment Act**. I support this bill because as the Director of the *Pathways to Education Professions (Teacher Assistant Program and Emerging Educators Program)* at ILSR where we prepare individuals who are multicultural and multilingual, and this pool of talented paraprofessionals holding post-secondary education, and degrees from institutions outside of the U.S. have expressed an interest in a pathway to teacher licensure.

The well-documented need for preparing teachers at the K-12 level is critical. This will impact school districts throughout Rhode Island by reducing the shortage of Teacher Assistants and teachers. Most significantly, this will diversify school staff to better reflect RI's changing student body and there is an improved learning outcome in various subjects because of this.

As of 2018 through 2023 ILSR has served over 800 participants, of these:

49%
are multilingual
learners (MLLs)

71%
of MLLs have
post-secondary
education

90%
expressed interest in
pursuing a teaching degree

These individuals could enter the bilingual dual language or world language teacher preparation programs. However, they would need tuition support as they work as Teacher Assistants, and their salaries are not sufficient to meet the tuition costs to complete certification requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fatima Martin - Director
Pathways to Education Professions
Emerging Educators Program
RI Institute for Labor Studies and Research