

Chris O'Brien

From: Tom Papa <tjpapa151@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 13, 2024 4:42 PM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: HB 7594 & HB 7514

Dear Chairman Abney and Committee Members:

My name is Thomas Papa; I'm a resident of Charlestown, RI and I'm writing in support of House Bills HB 7594 and HB 7514.

As a language advocate and a constituent, I write to you today to ask you to support two important pieces of language education legislation: the "Bilingual, Dual Language, and World Language Teachers Investment Act" (HB 7594) and the "Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act" (HB 7514). Rhode Island's growing Multilingual Learner population needs your support.

The first piece of legislation, the "Bilingual, Dual Language, and World Language Teachers Investment Act" (HB 7594), would establish a scholarship program for multilingual undergraduates and adults interested in becoming bilingual/dual language and world language educators at schools in the urban core or urban ring areas of Rhode Island. This legislation invests in multilingual people and people of color who reflect our student population and have been historically denied access to teacher education. This important legislation is the only solution to creating the sustainable teacher pipeline that RI desperately needs.

The second piece of legislation, the "Support and Access to Bilingual Education Act" (HB 7514), would create an incentive for schools and districts to implement or expand Dual Language Bilingual Education programs from Pre-K-12. Decades of research prove that Dual Language Bilingual Education programs have the best results for ALL students: English-speaking and multilingual. Furthermore, students in Dual Language Bilingual Education programs outperform their English-speaking peers in ELA and Math. These programs are cost neutral once implemented but need support to provide required up-front materials and professional development.

Despite the proven success of Dual Language Bilingual Education and the fast-growing Multilingual learner population, programs in Rhode Island have not grown to serve the needs of our state. These two bills would help us create, grow, and staff these programs. Investment is needed now to ensure that Multilingual Learners have access to the programs with the highest rate of success, and that all students are provided with a pathway to becoming multilingual.

Please support these bills to ensure that all Rhode Island students have access to multilingual education.

Thank you,

Thomas Papa
Charlestown, RI 02813