

Good Afternoon House Finance Committee,

My name is Wujuudat Balogun, I am a 12 grader at Classical High School and a member of Young Voices in Providence, RI. I am here today in support of HB 7594 which would create a scholarship fund for teachers seeking bilingual, dual language, or world language certification. This investment would support multilingual people and people of color who reflect our student population and have been historically denied access to teacher education.

This bill is really important to me because it recognizes the hardships and barriers of multilingual educators and allows for empathy. This bill would create understanding around the diverse struggles individuals can face and can create inclusivity for multilingual students. We owe it to every MLL student to succeed in school.

We need this to pass this bill because this bill addresses historical disparities that are still evident today. It will fill urban vacancies in schools across Rhode Island, where a majority of students are multilingual. It is an enriched educational opportunity to invest in future educators and to invest in support for MLL students.

I hope you consider how important this is to me. We are depending on you to make the right decision.

Thank you for your time and attention today.

Wujuudat Balogun