

February 1, 2023

Chair S. Youakim
House Education Finance—120 Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Chair Youakim and members of the House Education Finance Committee:

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (the Council) submits this letter in support of H.F. 22 offered by Representative K. Her to provide increased funding for English learners.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota's Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota's API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly urge the passage of H.F. 22.

In Minnesota, there are roughly 76,000 identified English learners—which is about 10% of the state's student population. At the Council, we are all too aware of the disproportionate damage inflicted on our most vulnerable communities by the COVID-19 pandemic, including English learners and their families. The loss of in-person education and personal interactions with educators caused most learners to progress more slowly, if not to regress. The pandemic shed light on the disparities impacting many of our communities and reinforced many of the ways we as a state are falling short of serving all Minnesotans. This is often especially true for many of our English learners.

Educational gaps that already existed in our state have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Understanding the long-term impacts will take years to understand. However, we must act now to initiate much-needed support for English learners. This bill will address a critical need by providing increased funding for these students through cross subsidy aid and additional general education aid. Providing this support is essential to meet the needs of English learners and by extension, their families.

We thank the Committee for its consideration of this bill and urge its adoption to provide the resources and support that English learners and families need and deserve to reach their potential and thrive.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans