

APPENDIX V-1:

Good Afternoon Madame Chair Udall, Vice Chair Fillmore and Committee Members.

My name is AM and I am the Dual Language Program Coordinator in the Tucson Unified School District. I have been an educator in the field of language learning for 22 years. In that time, I have taught students in various Bilingual Education models.

At the District's Language Acquisition Department, I work alongside a team of knowledgeable experts and talented practitioners in the field of language acquisition. Our team oversees the implementation of language programs, which range from Two-Way Dual Language Immersion to Structured English Immersion. Our district has just under 5,000 English Learners and there are approximately 94 languages represented.

The goal of our District is to provide high quality education for all students. This includes language learners. In an effort to do so, the District is building and expanding its Two-Way Dual Language Immersion programs. Two-Way Dual Language Immersion, known as TWDL, provides a pathway for students to attain high levels of academic achievement in conjunction with becoming bilingual and bi-literate 21st century global citizens. Moreover, students who participate in the District's TWDL pathway earn the Arizona State Seal of Bi-literacy upon high school graduation. This seal is considered highly amongst employers and institutions of higher education.

TUSD currently has 11 Two-Way Dual Language Immersion programs. Our team selected the early immersion TWDL model for our students, because years of research have demonstrated high levels of academic achievement for all students including English Learners. Students participating in Two-Way Dual Language Immersion achieve at or above the performance level of their mainstream peers.

It must be pointed out, TWDL immersion requires a linguistic balance of students who are English dominant and students whose primary language is the target language. A classroom that is linguistically balanced supports peer to peer language learning. Our District's Two-Way Dual Language Immersion programs are English/Spanish.

Due to Arizona's current English only law, Proposition 203, our English learners who cannot demonstrate "good" English and are under the age of 10, are excluded from participating in the early immersion dual language programs. English Learners are key to fortifying the academic and language learning achievement that is mutually shared between both language groups. As a consequence of Proposition 203, our District struggles to linguistically balance our classrooms. Linguistically balanced classrooms are a critical component to the success of the program.

Our team is here today to support HCR2001, which will allow all students access to the Two-Way Dual Language Immersion programs within the Tucson Unified School District. HCR 2001 will remove the barriers that prevent English Learners from participating and will provide our District's programs with authentic language models. Most importantly, this will permit both English dominant speaking students and English Learner students the opportunity to acquire bilingualism, bi-literacy and high academic achievement.

As a result, participating Arizona students will be assets to our local and distant communities as 21st century global citizens.

Once again, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to speak in support of HCR2001. We encourage you to give this bill the support needed in order to move forward toward local decision making in selecting the best programs for school communities.

Thank you Madam Chair Udall, Vice-Chair Fillmore and Committee Members.