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May 19, 2017

By electronic mail

The Honorable Lorena S. Gonzalez Fletcher
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: AB 952 (Reyes) – SUPPORT AS AMENDED, April 18,
2017**

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez Fletcher:

Public Advocates supports AB 952 (Reyes), as amended on April 18, 2017, to establish the Bilingual Teacher Professional Development Program. Specifically, this bill would allocate funding to provide professional development services for teachers providing instruction to English Learners.

Public Advocates is a civil rights legal organization that has served as a key voice for education equity in landmark cases such as *Serrano v. Priest* and *Williams v. California*. In the *Williams* lawsuit, we complained that thousands of students were denied equal educational opportunity because their teachers were not fully credentialed, not properly assigned to the courses they were authorized to teach, or were not authorized to teach English Learners. As part of the settlement agreement, the state set a minimum standard in legislation to be applied statewide and this standard is now one of the state's priorities which districts must address in their Local Control Accountability Plans. Our commitment to "making rights real" has shaped our vision of building an educational system that prepares all students for college and careers and supporting education policies that reflect the needs and voices of students and their families.

One of every five students in California speaks a language other than English. The top five languages are Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Tagalog and Arabic. With the passage of Proposition 58 in the November 2016 election, Californians have prioritized preparing K-12 students for our global economy where biliteracy and multilingualism are highly valued. We need educators that can meet the needs of these students to acquire the English language, develop biliteracy and develop specific academic language and content skills in English and a primary language other than English. California's severe teacher shortage is

characterized by steadily declining enrollment in educator preparation programs and growing turnover rates. According to the Learning Policy Institute, this shortage is especially acute in particular subject areas, including bilingual education. This attrition has a negative impact on student achievement and disproportionately affects high-needs student populations. With the passage of Proposition 58, there is an anticipated demand for dual language and other bilingual programs and educators to staff them. By providing targeted professional development to bilingual educators, AB 952 would address the state's teacher shortage and increase the supply of authorized dual language educators to meet the growing need.

For these reasons, we support AB 952 and its passage through the Committee so that California can bridge the gap between a high demand for bilingual teachers and the persistent shortage of qualified professional educators. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liz Guillen".

Liz Guillen
Director of Legislative & Community Affairs
(916) 803-5596 – cell

Cc: Assembly Appropriations Committee
Assembly Member Eloise Gómez Reyes