

To the Florida Legislative Delegation Representatives of Escambia County
By: Dr. Arlene Costello, President, Sunshine State Teachers of English to Speakers of
Other Language (SSTESOL) of Florida
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Senator Doug Broxon, Representative Alex Andrade, Representative Michelle Salzman, and honorable members of the Delegation, good evening and thank you for providing this opportunity to give input. I am Dr. Arlene Costello, a recently retired educator from the School District of Escambia County, adjunct faculty at the Office of International Affairs of the University of West Florida, and President of Sunshine State Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (SSTESOL) of Florida, a trusted leader in Florida for advancing the quality of English Language teaching through professional learning, research, standards and advocacy. I live on Wimbledon Drive, Pensacola, FL

The Sunshine State TESOL (SSTESOL) of Florida works with different organizations, such as the LULAC of Florida, the Florida NAACP, the Emerald Coast Teachers of English and the Florida Association of Bilingual and ESOL Supervisors.

I am speaking before you tonight to ask that you sponsor or co-sponsor a bill to reinstitute the teaching Certificate in Bilingual Education. Teachers would like to teach Bilingual Education but that certification has been eliminated since Florida instituted the English Only policy. We believe it is time to for the Florida Legislature, through your leadership, to realize the effects of bilingualism to the economy and the future of our children. We are all aware that bilingualism brings greater economic activity, job security, and many job opportunities and better pay. I have the advantage of speaking another language and assisting others in communicating with diverse groups and individuals. Being bilingual was a plus in my resume. Business organizations and educational entities recognize the value of **bilingualism** – they retain efficient bilingual employees. Therefore, it is important to equip our teachers with the necessary tools and certification to teach our students. All of us reached our goals because of teachers.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or visit my organization's website. The link is here. <https://sunshinestatetesol.wildapricot.org/> Thank you for your time, and may you and your families and the families of your constituents who are here tonight stay safe and healthy.