

State Senator Osten, Representatives, Co-Sponsors and supporters of dyslexia legislation, thank you for the opportunity to address HRB No. 5562.

Change is needed in Connecticut. I am fortunate that my first two children, age 17 and 11, learn and succeed naturally in our public school system. They are able to endure their school years as they grow with their peers and learn to their full potential. Fortunate because they made it obvious to see my third child, age 8, grade three, despite his high IQ and tremendous work ethic, falling behind and not receiving the support that he requires to learn to read. He hit a wall, as dyslexics do, 2 years ago in reading and has not made progress since despite his 3 years and running in a tier 3 severe decoding intervention program administered by a paraprofessional who is overseen by a reading consultant. Our school systems are designed to teach children to learn to read from kindergarten thru third grade, and then read to learn. Dyslexic kids are not ready to move on past third grade, or from when they hit their wall, because they never learned to read therefore hitting a language barrier. It is unfair to these kids, to ask them to get up and give their best everyday and expect the impossible from them, to succeed with out being taught to read in a way that they can learn.

My personal experience with our town school system in Montville has been a long and grueling one. I have learned if the parent does not persistently push and know what to ask for, a dyslexic child will not be recognized. It has been a year since I demanded the initial testing, more testing last November, and finally an independent evaluation diagnosing my son with a broad term of reading disorder. And lets allow these kids the gratification of what their disorder is, Dyslexia. A year and a half it has been, 5 PPT's, hours of testing, a diagnosis and next comes working with the school to administer a program that will help my son. All that time has past to get him to this point and still not receiving instruction which will help him yet. When I sit in on my sons decoding reading group, knowing what I know now, I can't help but feel remorse for the other kids that maybe dyslexic and never be recognized. It must be as equally frustrating for our teachers in this state to teach the children who display characteristics of dyslexia. To have their "hands tied" and not have a proven reading instruction program or training. I do not know the dollar amount is costs the state to give a child an education for 13 years but we all know in this room that reading is the ground level base of an education. Lets give our children an the early identification and proven reading instruction that will allow them to succeed.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Amanda Dawley