

March 14, 2014

RE: HRB 5562  
An Act Concerning Special Education

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of Proposed Bill HRB 5562. Dyslexia is a common, often invisible disability. As an Attorney representing students with special education needs, I have often seen devastating effects on students who have undiagnosed or unremediated dyslexia.

Many bright, capable students have their education derailed by the failure to identify and remediate dyslexia. An inability to read affects every aspect of functioning. The embarrassment of not being able to read text in class or to understand why you “just don’t get it” has a significant impact on a student’s ability to perform academically as well as to have future success. Teachers often unfortunately do not understand dyslexia and are not able to identify it early enough to allow instruction that would improve the difficulty. Providing the wrong instruction will not improve a dyslexic student’s ability to read so training is paramount. Waiting too long to diagnose and remediate dyslexia can have devastating results. Otherwise bright and capable students who would have been able to go on to college or competitive employment will begin to struggle significantly in school as the demands increase. Left undiagnosed, students fall further and further behind their peers making the required remediation more intense and of longer duration. Many students then become anxious or begin to act out to deflect the fact that they simply can’t read. Other subjects are impacted as we have a strong focus on reading across our curriculum.

By identifying dyslexia early and having staff trained to provide appropriate interventions, not only can we spare a lot of pain for a lot of children, but we will be allowing students to grow, learn and be successful which is good for our education system and our economy. Too much potential is wasted by not allowing these students to learn one of the fundamental tools for a successful future-the ability to read. Please show the students of our state that you recognize the struggle and that you support them as well as their families.

Thank you for your consideration.

Courtney Spencer