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To: [Edtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:Edtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

Subject: **Raised Bill No. 5562 Testimony “An Act Concerning Special Education”**

Dear State of Connecticut Legislators:

I support RB No. 5562 and request your approval of this legislation to include dyslexia on the individualized education program (IEP) form. This measure is a first step in recognizing the existence of dyslexia in order to provide educational assistance to those affected by it. I am a native of Connecticut and a long term resident. I am also a certified teacher.

According to longitudinal research conducted at Yale University for approximately thirty years, one in five children in Connecticut is dyslexic. In general, these children are not receiving the benefits of a free, appropriate education as mandated by Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, since they are not generally receiving appropriate intervention to enable them to read efficiently. A large part of the reading problem is that Connecticut essentially doesn't acknowledge that dyslexia exists, even though it is a clinical diagnosis.

Dyslexics do not lack intelligence. In fact, in many cases the exact opposite is true, since they frequently score very high on I.Q. tests but are not generally capable of reading fluently. Dyslexics are among our most brilliant scientists, architects, surgeons, engineers, CEOs, researchers, entrepreneurs, athletes, and artists, since they frequently perceive broad concepts, or the “big picture”, i.e. seeing things in three dimensions, or globally. Reading, however, is a two dimensional process, for which they require more appropriate instruction than that provided through the whole language process used primarily in Connecticut schools. Their issue is in receiving early intervention to overcome the obstacles to reading proficiently that they face in the conventional classroom.

By finally including dyslexia on individualized education program (IEP) forms, these children will have an opportunity to learn and develop academically, socially and economically.

One area that most legislators comprehend is cost benefit issues. Dyslexia is a perfect example of the benefits of early expenditures in appropriate academic intervention, compared to deferring the process. For example, if a child is not reading at grade level in first grade, she has a one in eight chance of becoming a proficient reader, without appropriate intervention. If a child is not reading at grade level upon entering grade four; the academic achievement gap increases exponentially, since at that point they are no longer learning to read, they are reading to learn. Connecticut, the richest state in the USA, based on per capita income, also has the highest academic achievement gap in the country and that dichotomy is virtually incomprehensible. I firmly believe that early literacy is a key component in providing access to the opportunities available in our great nation and espoused by our basic principles.

Please support this legislation, which is a small but important step forward.

Sincerely,

*Donald K. Takacs*