

Mr Chairman, Senators, Representatives and Guests.

My name is Joe Davenport, I am 15 years old and a sophomore at Vinal Tech.

And I am Dyslexic.

I was diagnosed in 7th grade, at that time I was reading on a 3rd grade level and decoding on a Kindergarten level.

I see things mechanically. Ask me to read an English textbook and write a paper on it, and I'll just give you a blank stare, but tell me to open the hood of a car and tear down the engine, now that is easy!

Honestly, the stacks of papers each of you have next to you would be overwhelming for me to read, but I ask you how many of you can rebuild an engine?

Words on a page look like gibberish, they bounce around in my head and I can't always make out what they are, but when I look at an engine I can see not only what you see (the outside of the engine) I see the internal parts all working together, gas and air flowing through the engine.

We Dyslexics have a different mind, we are mechanical, artistic, creative, brilliant and even geniuses. So I'm mechanical. I'm lucky to be in a school where my talent can shine, where I can start the groundwork to become a great mechanic.

Before I was diagnosed, when I went to school I used to think it would be just another day when I wouldn't be understood. When a teacher would point to the paper and say 'you know this, you know this, you know this' but I really didn't.

I don't like be called on to answer questions aloud in class because it takes me longer to process the answer, and I feel like everyone thinks I'm an idiot.

Reading out loud in class is one of my least favorite things to do. I feel like people think I'm just trying to get by. When I make mistakes, someone else shouts out the word making me feel dumb, but the truth is I probably knew the word I just messed up.

Since 7th grade I haven't had a Summer Vacation. I've attended special classes at the Dyslexia Institute 3 days a week during the summer. During the school year I attend tutoring at the Dyslexia Institute 2 days a week and stay after school for extra help 2 more days a week. Most kids are in school 30 hours a week, I'm in school 38 hours. Then I still have to do homework. But without being diagnosed with Dyslexia I would not have been able to get the help I needed and would not have been able to read and write this.

I am here today to help you understand what Dyslexia is, so maybe other kids won't have to struggle as hard as I did and do, after all 1 in 5 kids are like me.

Please recognize dyslexia as a learning disability, so that all dyslexic kids have a real chance to succeed.

Sincerely

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