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To: Edtestimony@cga.ct.gov

Subject: Senate Bill No 1054 Testimony “An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia”

Dear State of Connecticut Legislators:

I write in support of Senate Bill No 1054 Testimony “An Act Concerning Students with Dyslexia.” As a parent who has raised a child with dyslexia I am familiar with the academic obstacles and the emotional duress engendered by an educational system, unprepared to provide diagnostic and prescriptive intervention to adequately address the effects of a young child’s phonological processing weaknesses on his or her ability to learn reading related skills. As a result of my child’s experiences with misdiagnosis and inappropriate support services, I began to research best practices for teaching reading. I enrolled in a state university and acquired a Masters degree focused entirely on Reading instruction/assessment courses; however, it was not until after graduating that I was introduced to the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators and provided the information I needed to understand the science behind the stages of reading and spelling and how to implement evidence-based, systematic, structured, direct, explicit, diagnostic, prescriptive and individualized instruction. Over the past 17 years I have provided direct teaching to children and adults with reading disabilities and dyslexia, consultations with school professionals, and academic evaluations. Bill No 5562 and Bill No 1054 are the beginning steps toward the recognition of dyslexia in Connecticut’s public school children and young adults. These bills are the beginning steps in assisting parents who have been driven to find outside services for their children because of educational misdiagnoses and misunderstanding. I count myself amongst the parents who expect accountable adults to make responsible decisions that ensure that students with dyslexia and reading disabilities are no longer disenfranchised by school systems that lack teachers with the knowledge to design appropriate education plans that result in accelerated progress.

I supported Bill 5562 and I support Bill 1054. But many important steps still need to be taken. Early identification of students at risk for dyslexia is critical, as is early intervention. It is essential that all teachers be provided high quality professional development to learn how to administer assessments and analyze data. It is essential that all teachers be provided high quality professional development to learn how to incorporate literacy instruction across grades and domains, and an adequate amount of extended follow-up support for skills to become secure. Furthermore, it is critical that the state of Connecticut demand that our colleges and universities provide pre-service teachers with not only literacy instruction that is aligned with scientific research, but also intensive literacy instruction that addresses the needs of our children with dyslexia.

Respectfully submitted,
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