Dear CT Education Committee,

My name is Beth Kells and I live in Fairfield, CT. This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing.

I am writing to support Senate Bill 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia but I am requesting an amendment that candidates seeking a remedial reading endorsement complete a graduate level program aligned with evidence-based practices and IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.

As a mother of a dyslexic child I know that Senate Bill 317 is NOT comprehensive enough to provide the needed supports. The bill needs to include comprehensive teacher preparation using evidence based curriculum and content. This type of instruction of evidence based curriculum must be on the graduate level, not a course in of itself. It MUST take place in our CT Institutions of Higher Education, in regards to the literacy Instruction for students with Dyslexia. All students seeking degrees in elementary and high school education for either regular education and special education need to have evidenced based curriculum and content instruction built into the education degree curriculum.

When my son was in elementary school, none of his teachers were taught what dyslexia was, how to recognize it, and how to teach their students with dyslexia how to read. His dyslexia was not recognized in his school until I had outside testing done. Once it was recognized his classroom teachers did not know how to instruct my son in reading or provide any kind of accommodations in the classroom, as they were unaware as to how his limitations impacted his learning. An outside special education teacher had to be hired to teach my son to read because none of the current special education teachers at the school were trained to provide evidenced based reading instruction for him.

The bill must include teacher preparation that is aligned with evidence based standards that are proven to be effective. If all teachers are provided information in evidence based standards for reading instruction then teaching dyslexic students to read would be a more seamless process. Although my son received evidenced based reading instruction by an outside

hired special education teacher, the instruction was not consistent enough and intense enough. If his classroom teacher knew how to teach my son to read there would have been an easy transition to his reading instruction and more opportunity to incorporate it in a consistent and intensive way in his everyday classroom activities. Sadly that was not the case.

The bill should require that the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards For Teachers of Reading should be aligned with the Remedial Reading (102) Endorsement. In order for a proposed teacher to receive their literacy license the test needs to include knowledge that the IDA has stated the proposed teacher needs, which defines what all teachers of reading need to know and be able to do to teach all students to read proficiently. Since 15 to 20% of the population is dyslexic, then all teachers need to be skilled in the methods of teaching dyslexic students to read. All teachers need to be held to the same standards as all teachers will be teaching dyslexic students.

Lastly, the bill at this point calls for "a course" in dyslexia. This is totally NOT SUFFICIENT. As stated above, far more than "a course" needs to be taught to students of teaching in order for evidence based methodology to be mastered. Dyslexia is a complicated learning limitation and requires a reading program that is on the graduate level, aligned with evidence based practices and IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards For Teachers of Reading. Once this level of requirements, IDA Accreditation, becomes standard in all universities and colleges teacher programs, students with dyslexia will have the same opportunities to reach their academic potential as students without dyslexia do now.

Thank you.

Beth Kells