

My name is Jane Ross. I live in Westport, CT.

Below is my written testimony. I will not be testifying at the hearing.

I am providing testimony in two capacities: First, as the parent of a young adult with dyslexia, who did not learn to read until he was finally identified as dyslexic and provided with appropriate research-based instruction in the 5th grade; and second, as the founder and Executive Director of Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities, Inc., a national, Westport-based nonprofit organization that provides information, guidance and inspiration to the families of children with learning disabilities and ADHD.

I support the passage of Senate Bill No. 317, An Act Concerning Dyslexia, **with amendments**. It is critically important that the bill be amended to state that candidates who seek an endorsement in remedial reading, remedial language arts or reading consulting must complete **comprehensive preparation** in teaching reading, using evidence-based curriculum and content.

Specifically, such preparation requires a graduate-level program that is aligned with evidence-based practices, and with the IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.

It is useful to note, below, a few of the points concerning teaching children with dyslexia to read, based on an article titled “Treating Dyslexia,” by Dr. Margie Gillis, the leading expert on reading who is a Research Affiliate at the Haskins Laboratories at Yale, as well as the President of Literacy How, which trains teachers on how to provide research-based reading instruction. The article is one of several hundred on the Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities website at www.SmartKidswithLD.org. The website is widely regarded as a leading resource on learning disabilities, and currently receives over 36,000 visitors each month. These points include:

- Teaching children with dyslexia to read requires a systematic approach that builds on previously learned skills, one step at a time
- Children with dyslexia will not learn what is left unsaid
- Teachers need to understand each student’s challenges; have a working knowledge of the rules of the English language, and know how to teach reading in a direct, individualized, explicit, and systematic way
- The core components of a reading program identified by the National Reading Panel include:
Phonemic awareness, the speech sounds of language. English is not a predictable language and does not have a one-to-one correspondence between letters and sounds
Explicit phonics, reinforcing letter-sound relationships, spelling rules, vowel patterns, etc.
Fluency – fast, accurate, effortless reading with appropriate inflection
Text comprehension and vocabulary Understanding passages that are read, including what words mean and the ability to use words in spoken and written language
- There is no quick fix for students with dyslexia, or reading disabilities

As the points above make clear, to become proficient in teaching reading to the tremendous number of children who struggle (an estimated 15% to 20% of children, a majority of whom are

undiagnosed), requires comprehensive preparation, including far more than a single course in reading.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Ross

Jane B. Ross

Executive Director

Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities, Inc.

www.SmartKidswithLD.org