

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my opinion and hope with regard to the Senate Bill before you today, Raised Bill # 317.

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude at the adoption and inclusion of Dyslexia as a Specific Learning Disability in Connecticut. This change alone will help untold numbers of students who may otherwise have gone without identification and intervention.

That you are now able to identify and support Connecticut students that have heretofore been under served, and instructors who may be unprepared to help these students learn, places you in a unique and powerful position.

As you well know, dyslexia is a complicated disability, and definitions of the dyslexia seem to vary from organization to organization, country to country. In short, this language based neurological disorder seems to get it's sticky fingers into a whole array of different areas with regard to education and student success with learning.

The variety of ways in which a student may present signs of (their) dyslexia can be a daunting task for an educator. Will the over-active child with Executive Functioning issues get remediation throughout the day? The student with obvious reversal and sequencing problems? What about the student that aces the spelling test on Friday only to have forgotten every word by Monday. And what do we do for the child who can't master the alphabet or sequence numbers - and he's in sixth grade - or beyond?

"A course" is VERY unlikely to prepare instructors for the challenges they will encounter with their students with dyslexia, leaving the instructor feeling as though they may not have done enough (because they didn't know what else to do) and leaving the struggling students feeling the way many students with dyslexia have always felt: unteachable, unreachable, maybe stupid.

We can do more for our struggling learners, and you get to decide this RIGHT NOW. I am asking and hoping that you can use your position to ensure that you have done as much as you can possible do and that the preparedness of the instructors follows evidence based standards.

The truth is, when you prepare teachers to instruct students with dyslexia, you are training them to teach ALL LEARNERS. Strategies that have proven to be effective for students with dyslexia benefit all students, as they tend to be multisensory, sequential and systematic.

Real, comprehensive training to prepare Connecticut's teachers to support dyslexics is the right thing to do because NO STUDENT WILL BE LEFT OUT. When you can help a student with dyslexia, all students learn and all boats rise.

You have undertaken the responsibility to safeguard the education of Connecticut's children. This is not a small responsibility I thank you for your dedication to our future and hope that you can vote in favor of giving our teachers and students ALL of the benefits they so deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nancy Platt Dawud
14 Pondsides Drive
Wallingford, CT 06492