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Re: Senate Bill 317 An Act Concerning Dyslexia

Testimony Respectfully Submitted to the Members of our Connecticut Legislature:

My name is Paula Luxenberg. I have a CT teaching credential in elementary education and special education and taught for 10 years in the public schools. I am, and have been for the last 33 years, a private educational therapist in West Hartford working with individuals who have learning problems that prevent them from reaching their potential academically. Many of these students have Dyslexia.

I am in support of Senate Bill 317, and I want to thank the education committee and this legislature for their continuing commitment to meet the needs of all of our emergent readers as well as our Dyslexic students. However, I request that you amend this bill to clearly differentiate between these two essential tasks: training to teach all emergent readers versus training to teach at-risk and Dyslexic students. Professional development and in service training is needed for all regular education teachers who are engaged in the teaching of reading. However we need to acknowledge the limitations of this type of intervention when preparing teachers to address the needs of our at-risk and Dyslexic students. To meet the needs of our Dyslexic students our institutions of higher education need to drastically change their teacher training curriculum.

Studies show that individuals with Dyslexia process information differently than do non-dyslexics. If Dyslexics process information differently, then it makes sense that they would need to be taught differently and much more intensively than other children. The good news is that we don't need a study to research how to teach children with Dyslexia. In fact, we have the tools to teach close to 100% of Dyslexic individuals to read. The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) provides Knowledge and Practice Standards that are being implemented nationwide. However currently our institutions of higher education do not provide curriculum that prepares teachers to provide early identification, appropriate evidenced-based interventions and accommodations for students with Dyslexia. We need to revise the 102 Remedial Reading Endorsement to contain these IDA standards. This will ensure that Connecticut's institutions of higher education will appropriately train Dyslexia Specialists who have undergone a 6<sup>th</sup> year or Masters level program and are specifically credentialed in this field.

It is hard to believe that Connecticut's institutions of higher education do not already provide this training, even to our reading specialists and special education teachers. We must change that now.

Thank you for your continued support,

Paula Luxenberg