

Chairmen Boucher, Slossberg, Fleischmann and Ranking Member Lavielle,

My name is Courtney Darby, I live in Darien Connecticut. I fully support HB 7254.

Thank you for hearing/reading my testimony in support of HB 7254 An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete A Program of Study in Evidenced Based Structured Literacy.

I have two children with reading disabilities. Both of our children's reading challenges were not remedy until far too late--3 grade and 6th grade---despite regular communication/questions to their teachers every year.

By not having appropriate teacher training and addressing children's needs late, this hurts kids and schools across our state in many ways:

- By third grade kids are reading to learn. Students fall behind in ALL subjects.
- Teachers have a bigger gap to address students instructional needs.
- Students suffer anxiety about being behind.
- Closing the gap requires more intensive instruction (which is ultimately more expensive).

We need to ensure our teacher really and truly know how to identify and teach reading! This is a complex and challenging area as every child is different.

Across the state, we need to make sure special educators are trained in evidence-based structured literacy, along with a requirement for supervised practicum hours, which is critical. Special educators need a "Program of Study" in Dyslexia, for Special Educators within Institutes of Higher Education and should receive Dyslexia training as pre-service teacher candidates, before they graduate and reach our local school districts. Please support HB 7254.

Thank you,

Courtney Darby