

Dear Legislator,

My name is Kim Foss and I live in the town of Thomaston, CT . My email is kmfoss@sbcglobal.net. This is my written testimony and I will not be testifying at the hearing. **I fully support HB 7254, An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia.**

**Did you know** that early intervention results in the removal of Dyslexic students from the special education population?

**Did you know** that main stream reader can be taught any way a Dyslexic reader will learn, so teaching teachers to teach in a methodology that helps dyslexic readers learn, and will also work for main stream readers?

**Did you know** that reading dysfunction has been found to be the root of lack of progression in school and root of aggression?

**Did you know** that prison populations are made up of a greater percentage of poor readers than those that can read?

**Did you know** Richard Branson, Einstein, Governor Malloy and one of out every 10 children is dyslexic?

**Did you know** that dyslexia is more than the swapping of letters. It can be a failure to rhyme, skipping words and lines.

- I learned all of that because our child has Dyslexia.

\*When we first saw our child was failing to read even letters in Kindergarten, despite many teachers' best efforts, we worried. When in first grade he could not read basic sight words like "I", we went into action. We paid for an outside service to help our son to "catch up". We wasted \$5000 at Sylvan Learning Centers and still our son could not read any word in a first grade book. We learned that reading methods are not a one fits all. It became clear to us, after some research, that he had dyslexia. We spent the next 4 years trying to get a diagnosis from the school. In the meanwhile, we hired tutors who specialized in teaching Orton Gillingham method which is an evidence-based structured literacy program designed for dyslexic students. He finally started to read!!!! We continued to pay to get him tutoring for the 3 1/2 years because the school had no such person on staff, but I assert that they should have. We finally got a diagnosis this year in 6th grade, of dyslexia. I wonder how many other parents gave up and simply accepted that their child is a non-reader? What is the cost in having a citizen who cannot read? Go through the rosters of inmates in our correctional facilities, take inventory of how many non-readers there are...add it up.

This bill, HB 7254, is essential to meet the critical needs of students with Dyslexia.

The bill, HB 7254 calls for a "Program of Study" in Dyslexia, for Special Educators within Institutes of Higher Education, which is needed. You would not let an unqualified mechanic work on your car without training. It makes so much sense for those working directly with Dyslexic to be trained. HB 7254 will allow special Education teachers to receive Dyslexia training as pre-service teacher candidates, before they graduate and reach our local school districts. This bill aligns teacher preparation for special educators with evidence-based structured literacy, along with a requirement for supervised practicum hours, which is critical.

Reading intervention leads to fluency, and goes a long way to helping alleviate the burden of society when students never reach their potential. Many students identified and intervened on as early as Kindergarten can LEAVE special education services. **It is the one population that we can make inroads with because many students who have dyslexia have HIGH intelligence...they just cannot learn to read the traditional way.** Many times previous Dyslexia legislation has required training in Tiers 1 and 2 of

Connecticut's Mutli Tiered System of Support, but has **yet to address the most important tier, Tier 3 Special Education, which includes the most severe students with Dyslexia!**

You have an opportunity to solve this problem. Please pass the bills so that a program of study in evidence based structured literacy designed for Dyslexia for Special Education Teachers can be routine.

**"The readers today will become the leaders tomorrow."** You have the power to affect change.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication to our Connecticut students.

NAME: Kim Foss

TOWN: Thomaston, CT