

March 15, 2017

Good Afternoon Co-Chairs: Senator Boucher, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Representative Lavielle and other members of the Education Committee. My name is Tim Howard, I live in New Hartford, Connecticut. I am in support House Bill 7254: An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia.

Our Special Education Teachers should receive the required training that will support all struggling readers. HB 7254 calls for a "Program of Study" in Dyslexia, for Special Educators within Institutes of Higher Education, which is needed. I was amazed to find out this was not already a requirement. Districts should not have to pay for this training, this should be taught in college.

HB 7254 aligns teacher preparation for special educators with evidence-based structured literacy, along with a requirement for supervised practicum hours, which is critical. This has been proven to work with Dyslexic students and all struggling readers. 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. HB 7254 is essential to meet the critical needs of students with Dyslexia.

My Daughter Zoey Howard has Dyslexia. We have been through a lot to get her services that will allow her to progress in school. She attends The Kildonan School in Amenia NY and it has had such a positive impact on her. All of the teacher at The Kildonan School have a background in Dyslexia and they are trained in Orton Gillingham. We have seen positive growth while Zoey has been at Kildonan. Unfortunately Kildonan is over an hour away from our home. We should not have to drive over an hour away to get the services Zoey needs to progress in school. Special Education teachers need a program of study in Dyslexia within Higher Education as outlined in HB 7254. Then people will start driving over an hour to put their kids in Connecticut schools!

As a resident in the State of Connecticut, I request your support of the Dyslexia legislation.

Respectfully,

Tim Howard
New Hartford, CT 06057