

Testimony of Gina Maroney  
On Raised House Bill No. 7254  
March 13, 2017

Dear Senator Boucher, Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, and other members of the Education Committee;

My name is Gina Maroney and I live in New Hartford, CT. I am writing to ask for your support of *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*.

My two dyslexic children had numerous special education teachers over the years who were not trained properly in their Institutes of Higher Education to identify or remediate students with dyslexia. I have submitted testimony in the past for dyslexia legislation so as a reminder, my daughter ended her 7<sup>th</sup> grade year only reading at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level and my son finished 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading only at a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. They both had Individual Education Plans (IEPs) starting in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade so both received special education services BUT it was not an evidence-base structured literacy program. I also had to have an independent (outside of the school) evaluation of both of my children to have them properly identified.

Currently both of my children are attending private schools where teachers are properly trained to educate them; and they are thriving! It was very hard to remove them from their public school where they had friends since preschool and as teenagers, their peer support and interactions became increasingly important. I had to put that aside since I wanted my kids to know how to read because they were denied a Free Appropriate Public Education that they are entitled to under IDEA. Not educating a dyslexic student properly the first time has a financial expense but also an emotional expense as these children often experience depression and anxiety from feeling "stupid".

Please support HB 7254 which would:

- require a "Program of Study" in Dyslexia, for Special Educators within Institutes of Higher Education, which is needed.
- align teacher preparation for special educators with evidence-based structured literacy, along with a requirement for supervised practicum hours, which is critical.
- 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.**

Sincerely,

Gina Maroney, parent  
New Hartford, CT