

Good day.

Thank you for considering the seriousness and necessity of the House Bill currently before you. My name is Dawn McNary, I live in East Haddam, Connecticut. 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. I am asking that you, too, put your full support behind this bill.

Having testified in front of the committee many times and having observed the committee in action I have no doubt that you all aim to do what is best for the children of Connecticut. Education of so many young people is a very important responsibility. Understanding the students you are responsible for is step one in being successful at your given mission.

This understanding is even more critical in the classroom. Day in and Day out 8 plus hours a day 180 days a year of learning can either be a roaring success or a complete failure. But unlike a widget that is not functioning correctly a child cannot be tossed aside and left out. Failing to reach a child and instill a desire to learn and explore opportunities is a failure that follows that child into adolescence and into adulthood. That failure has ancillary effects that reach out from the child, adolescent, and adult into society. That initial failure to reach and educate the child affects us all, in one way or another.

The current situation is not working. Too many children are not being reached. Too many children are being left out of learning, deemed unreachable. The simple fact is that in Connecticut classrooms, both GENED and SPED the large majority of teachers lack the training necessary to teach children identified as Dyslexic. In many districts there is not one educator in the entire district that has been formally trained in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia. The status-quo is not acceptable.

For the above reasons I ask that you support HB7254. This bill WILL change lives and make a positive difference in our Connecticut Schools. In summary:

HB 7254 calls for a "Program of Study" in Dyslexia, for special educators within Institutes of Higher Education.

HB 7254 aligns teacher preparation for special educators with evidence-based structured literacy, along with a requirement for supervised practicum hours, which is critical.

HB 7254 allows 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.

Thank you, again, for your consideration of this bill and understanding of the challenges our Connecticut youth face daily in the classroom due to lack of proper training amongst our educators.

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