

March 15,

2017

**Testimony in Support of
HB 7254
Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia**

Chairmen Boucher, Slossberg and Fleischmann and Ranking Member Lavielle, thank you for hearing my testimony in support of HB 7254 An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidenced-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia.

The number one cost in special education is addressing the needs of kids who can't read. The biggest reason for not being able to read is dyslexia, with close to twenty percent of students in our schools being affected. Arguably, learning to read is the most important academic skill we teach our kids. They learn to read -- then by fourth grade they read to learn. We have a precious few years to teach kids properly.


As a parent, I know this road all too well. Our daughter was identified as dyslexic at the end of fourth grade. Currently, there is no state requirement for those wishing to be certified in Special Education to know how to teach structured literacy. A fundamental responsibility is to identify and remediate kids who are dyslexic with qualified special education teachers who know how to teach phonemic awareness.

Special Education teachers need to have specific training in evidenced based structured literacy (a program such as Orton-Gillingham) to be able to successfully remediate students with dyslexia. This bill requires teachers who wish to be certified in Special Education receive this training.

This legislation adds no cost to our state budget. Furthermore, early intervention and appropriate remediation will save money over the long run -- by teaching dyslexic students the skills to learn to read -- and avoiding the secondary consequences of learning disability not remediated including misbehavior, depression and school avoidance.

Simply, we need to do what's right for students with dyslexia. Special Education teachers need to know how to teach structured literacy skills. I ask for your consideration of this bill and would be pleased to answer any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrie Wood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and a distinct "W".

Terrie Wood

State Representative - 141st District