



Testimony in support of H.B. No. 6620 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RIGHT TO READ AND ADDRESSING OPPORTUNITY GAPS AND EQUITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Submitted by Michael Coyne, Ph.D.
University of Connecticut
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Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Michael Coyne. I am a Professor of Special Education and Educational Psychology and the Co-Director of the Center for Behavioral Education and Research at the Neag School of Education, University of Connecticut. My research and scholarship focuses on early literacy and reading development, especially for students at risk for experiencing learning difficulties and disabilities.

I write to strongly support the Right to Read Act.

Connecticut has one of the largest reading opportunity gaps in the country. This persistent and insidious reading opportunity gap affects thousands of children across Connecticut, and disproportionately impacts children from poverty and children from underrepresented groups. The long term effects of the reading opportunity gap are significant and substantial – with compounding negative impacts not only on academic achievement, but also on important social and economic outcomes as well.

Fortunately, CT has made important investments in supporting reading success for all students through CT's K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK3LI), CT's Literacy Model, and other efforts. CT's Literacy Model has provided research-based teacher and principal training in reading instruction, developed family engagement modules in literacy, and implemented a comprehension K-3 reading model with the goal of ensuring reading success for all students. CK3LI has supported more than 70 schools from across 17 districts and has resulted in measurable and meaningful improvements in student reading outcomes in high priority school districts across Connecticut. The **Right to Read Act will sustain and extend the reach and effectiveness of these home grown efforts to narrow the reading opportunity gap in Connecticut.**

I particularly want to express my support the establishment of the **Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success**. As a reading researcher, I believe the Center will provide important ongoing support to the SDE and Connecticut's schools and districts in ensuring that reading efforts reflect current scientific knowledge about reading instruction and will build state-wide coaching and training capacity for assisting schools and districts implement the intensive reading support program outlined in the Act.

Thank you for your time.

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