

Good evening esteemed chairs and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to be able to come before you today to testify on bill SB14, sections 2 and 3. My name is Kim Healy, and I am a member of the Reading Leadership Implementation Council. I firstly want you to know that these amendments to the Right to Read law were not discussed or presented to the Council, so I am providing my testimony based only on how I interpret it. It should be noted that we just had a meeting not even 2 weeks ago.

Before I get into my comments on the bill, I want you to know why I am still a member of the Council since I am sure you will sense my frustrations by the time I finish. Others and I on the Council have big issues with how the implementation has gone.

- A statistic I have heard here at the Capital not too long ago- only 12% of young boys of a certain race can read at standard levels, meaning 88% are falling below standard.
- approximately 70% of our first-year community college students need remedial reading and writing before they are allowed to begin taking classes– these are kids that have high school diplomas, almost all from CT schools
- after over 2 years this law has not helped even one student learn to read. I am determined to keep coming here until we get the law fixed so it can be successful.

Comment on the amendments:

Section 2 appears to require CT colleges and universities to teach the Science of Reading to its Ed students. I have been asking for this since Feb 2022. I am glad to see action being taken.

Section 3 of the amendment appears to attempt to take away local control and give it to the SDE and center for literacy districts by allowing the state to develop compliance measures and audit procedures for teacher training. Recent decisions made under the Right to Read law passed judgment over almost half the districts in our state - and the highest performing ones at that- and de-professionalized those reading specialists, teachers, experts and superintendents who provided extensive supporting documentation on what curriculum they are providing, and the outcomes achieved to ensure their students are learning to read and following the science of reading.

I urge this committee to please go back over the entire Right to read law and clarify the intent with specifics. How I interpret the law, it allowed every district who applied to be certified that they are complying with requirements of the science of reading. I do not believe that the law gave the state power to tell 80% of the expert applicants that they were wrong but that is exactly what happened.

Amendments that I recommend are needed now:

- require the Center approve any district created curriculum or models. Approvals were given based on commercial programs only. I have reviewed the waiver documents and do not see any approvals that were district created.
- require that CT should be teaching the science of reading to our higher education students at CT colleges and universities. – Fran Rabinowitz mentioned this earlier.

- incorporate all of the science of reading masterclasses that are already being provided through Capps
- require the Center provide data to support that the added compendiums of programs that were added in December – meet the law’s requirements like we did for the first 7 programs.
- It was mentioned earlier about letters to districts about offering paths forward. Our most recent Council meeting was cut in half and we never discussed any paths forward.
- You have heard this already today but we need more time to get this right- please grant us a year extension and not burden our school districts with this law until it is clear what they will need to do.

In closing, it was suggested that your committee meet with members of the Dept of Ed. Please include the Reading Council. We are your appointed eyes and ears and can fully inform you on what is being discussed. We meet again on the 19<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. I have requested that our meetings be posted to the Dept of Ed website. They have not been over the last 2 years. Please come to our meeting if you can.

I highly recommend you listen to Sold a Story

-Other areas you need to consider- What is being done about the CT Partnership for Literary Success? Before any more power is taken away from districts, we need to review all of the different programs that have been funded and doing the work of bringing the science of reading to CT for over a decade. They need to provide data on the improvement in reading that have been made.