

Raquel Muller
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Dear Chair Roblan and Education Committee Members:

I am a resident of Beaverton, OR and I am writing to ask you to support SB612, which benefits children with dyslexia, like my son Liam.

Did you know that as many as 20% of kids in public schools suffer from dyslexia? Yet many of them go undiagnosed for years, and still many others are not receiving the kinds of intervention that could help them be successful in school and reach their potential. You see, these kids are just as bright and capable as their peers, but because of neurological differences in the way their brains work they have a hard time demonstrating these capabilities via reading, writing, and sometimes math. The result is that these kids may be perceived and labeled as “lazy” or “not working to potential.” Furthermore, they often feel “stupid” and begin to withdraw from school or develop behavioral problems in their efforts to cope. My son Liam experienced some of this and, like many dyslexic kids, he repeated a grade in hopes that this would help him “catch up.” I now realize that holding him back was a mistake and did not help him at all.

What kids like Liam need is to receive adequate educational interventions so that they can learn and achieve. This requires that teachers be better prepared to identify the warning signs of dyslexia, and that school districts screen for dyslexia in the earliest grades. These are two of the goals of SB 612, and they are two measures that would help school districts provide kids with dyslexia with a “free and appropriate public education,” as stated in section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Additionally, SB612 calls for future teachers to receive specific coursework on dyslexia during their training, and proposes that school districts keep a dyslexia specialist on staff to help students with dyslexia succeed.

Senator Roblan, I thank you sincerely for your service to our state, and I ask that you please investigate further what is happening to students with dyslexia, the most common form of learning disability. I also would like you to take into consideration that while many parents, myself included, are able to provide their dyslexic children with private tutoring or private schooling, this is clearly something that is out of the reach of many families, and thus, puts children from those families at an even greater disadvantage. Further, many parents go through years of fighting with their school districts in order to obtain much-needed appropriate accommodations and in-school intervention for their kids. This is not the way it should be, and it only adds to the stress of these families and thus contributes to the detriment of these very bright students’ lives.

Please support dyslexic students in our schools by endorsing SB612.

Sincerely,

Raquel Muller, Ph.D. (parent of a dyslexic child)
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