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Diane Hochstein has served as director of learning and training programs for more than twenty-eight years. She is currently the President of the SOI Service Company. She served as Chief Educational Officer for Bridges Learning Systems (1996-2009) which was founded in 1996 by William Brock, former Senator from Tennessee and subsequent Secretary of Labor.

Through the SOI Service Company and previously through Bridges Learning Systems, Diane applies the resources of SOI Systems® that have been developed over the past fifty years by Drs. Mary and Robert Meeker. These resources include learning abilities assessments, systems for diagnosing learning problems, training materials for developing learning skills, systems for the diagnoses and remediation of perceptual disabilities, and methods for teaching curricular concepts to students who have unconventional learning styles.

Diane has directed different programs in many diverse organizations: public schools at the PreK-12 level; community colleges; job training programs such as Job Corps and Workforce 2000; juvenile justice, corrections, industry; community aid organizations such as Esperanza and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America; private learning centers; and specialized schools such as state schools for the deaf. The diversity of these applications means finding the proper mix of programs to fit the specific needs and resources of the various clients. Within each client organization she focuses on the needs of the learner – whether those are academic, training, or both. Diane has also been an integral part of SOI Systems product development by bringing new needs from the field to be addressed by on-going R&D.

Dear Senator Roblan and Education Committee Members:

If I shared my thoughts with all of you for one hour, it would not do more than sharing my thoughts with all of you for 3 minutes.

The verb “to teach” is an action taking place in every classroom across America by hard working, devoted teachers. The verb “to learn” is an action that happens within each child prior to school and, of course, eventually in the classroom. When students fail to prosper in the educational system, the impact to self-esteem, motivation, and cooperation is greatly diminished.

We have categories that we can put these students into. It is critical that educators know what more can be observed and understood about students that are struggling. My experience over the past 28

years has been that teachers simply do not feel equipped to make accurate observations as to what may be the cause or what to do about it. Often things are said by teachers out of frustration that stay stuck in my minds of these students. SB 612 addresses this need by training teachers about the signs of dyslexia and the appropriate intervention techniques to address their learning needs.

As the swirl of concern surrounds struggling students, many turn off or turn away from education. In my work with the adult offender population, the determined resistance to being in school happens as early as 3rd grade. Long after a student has moved on and out of the system, the feeling of educational failure remains and negative life changing decisions plague them. This is why early intervention is so critical. Screening for indicators of dyslexia in K and 1st grade is the most appropriate time to begin interventions.

Tracy, age 63, stopped going to school on a regular basis in 3rd grade. Shamed he could not read. He was tied to a tree by his teacher in 1st grade so that he would learn to grow straight. No support at home. Tracy spent 37 years in Federal Prison. Now that we know the cause of his learning failure and have addressed it, Tracy has been free of criminal behavior for the past two years and is running an organic garden business in Idaho. What we now know was his problem is what I am training teachers to observe in K, 1st and 2nd grades today.

School failure is not the cause of criminal behavior. There are many factors involved. But in my experience, every juvenile or adult offender I have worked with has a foundation of school issues involved. This is not a surprising statement, 60% of America's prison inmates are illiterate and 85% of all juvenile offenders have reading problems (Source: U.S. Department of Education) but we simply must be better prepared to address these issues more quickly, accurately, and kindly. The failing students are not the enemy of the high stakes assessments. They are the victims of needing more understanding and help.

I spend 40% of my time working in the offender population. Prisons, State and Federal Reentry Programs, and Juvenile Facilities are searching for answers as to how to bridge the gap between institutions back into communities. Addressing the learning needs of students with dyslexia in schools would make a considerable dent in this monumental task. Why do certain states determine how many beds will be necessary in prisons based on how many students fail the 4th grade high stakes assessment?

I stand by my statement, "It is easier to build children than mend adults." We need to broaden knowledge so we have more tools to build with. In this room today, decisions will be made that will put education in the forefront. That is exactly where it belongs.

I humbly and urgently ask for your support in putting Senate Bill 612 into action as soon as is possible.

Respectfully,

Diane Hochstein