

March 17, 2015

Honorable Senators,

Though it's St. Patrick's Day and I'm wearing the green, I'm not celebrating today as I think back over the life of my younger brother. Because he couldn't seem to learn to read, he was held back in first grade by Mrs. Prescott not once, but twice, and he never really did master the fine art of reading, though to this day he is intelligent and after a very rough youth and young adulthood finally productive. Perhaps the failure of his first grade teacher to recognize Jimmy's dyslexia and to know what to do about it was understandable 75 years ago, but it is not acceptable today. Yet, only 3 years ago, as she was leaving an IEP meeting for one of her students, my dyslexia therapist wife was approached by the special education teacher at a Portland Public School and asked where he could learn something about dyslexia. This young specialist, certified in special education in the state of Oregon, had had no background or training in how to help those students in his case load who had the specific learning disability of dyslexia. You have the power to mandate that all teachers have an understanding of this common learning difference and that they have been trained in ways to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of the 15-20% of the students in their classes who probably have dyslexia. Please carefully consider this bill.

Thank you,

John McAteer

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