

SB 221

Hearing Date: March 30, 2017

Dear Senator Arnie Roblan and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

As a parent of two dyslexic children, I am writing to you today to encourage your opposition to SB 221, which would eliminate the requirement for teacher preparation programs to align with Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading from the International Dyslexia Association.

In 1999, Dr. Reid Lyon, Chief of the Child Development and Behavior Branch of the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) testified before the congressional Committee on Education and the Workforce about the inadequate preparation of teachers in our country to teach reading. He is famously quoted as stating: "At present, motivated teachers are often left on their own to obtain specific skills in teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, and comprehension by seeking out workshops or specialized instructional manuals."

Since that time, universities and teacher preparation programs have resisted the implementation of the higher standards recommended by Dr. Lyon, to the detriment of almost 20% of our nation's children who require teachers with these specific skills in order to attain literacy. Had these changes been implemented almost twenty years ago, my children might not have required expensive, private tutoring after school in order to reach their full potential, while being denied the Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to which they are entitled.

Consider the palpable impact upon Oregon's economy and criminal justice system if 20% more of our citizens were able to achieve the full literacy potential promised to them by our public school system.

The universities and teacher preparation programs have had almost twenty years to make these recommended changes, and have deliberately avoided the issue. Because of their calculated resistance to higher standards, they have forfeited their ability to self-determine their course and should now be required to adhere to internationally recognized educational standards and methodology proven to be best practices to successfully teach students with dyslexia to read.

I encourage you to set an example for our nation, and hold Oregon teachers and the programs that inadequately prepare them to a higher standard by opposing SB221.

Thank you,

Theresa Sorensen  
Happy Valley, OR