

Chair Roblan, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kaye McNally. I retired in 2014 after working 28 years at the Marion County Juvenile Department. During my final three years, I worked as an Education Advocate and became an Irlen screener. I've been an Irlen Screener now for 5 years. Since retirement, I have offered to screen children in my school district (North Santiam School District) and those connected with our Youth Services Team in the Santiam Canyon. I also met with teachers at our local K-8 school to raise Irlen awareness and gave them the short version questionnaire for any child they might consider for screening. The elementary school children I screened seemed to enjoy the process. Not all actually exhibited moderate or severe Irlen issues. And it's helpful to screen in or screen out for Irlen issues, because interventions can vary greatly for reading and school difficulties. For a child with Irlen issues, a simple layer or two of color can allow them to make letters stop moving on the page or read without getting a headache. For those with severe Irlen, colored lenses can be a life changer.

As an Education Advocate, I tested many teens and they are reluctant to "look different", even when there is a noticeable difference in how it makes them able to read. But, by the time they are teenagers, they often have lost any initial love of reading and only read as assigned and as minimally as possible. If every child is evaluated for possible screening, then teachers are aware; kids get the help early on; and it's "no big deal" to use an overlay or get colored-lens glasses. This bill, SB142, makes that possible.

Getting all children questioned and then screened as indicated could turn around our readers with difficulties, decrease poor behavior in classrooms and, ultimately, increase our graduation rate.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.