

Testimony for the Senate Committee on Education

In opposition of SB 221

March 30, 2017

To Senator Roblan & Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

My name is Diana Sicker and I am a founding member of Decoding Dyslexia Oregon. I am a parent of a student with dyslexia. And I have dyslexia myself.

Today, this committee will hear about two bills relating to dyslexia, one on screening (SB 1003) and the other about teacher preparation (SB 221). As a person with dyslexia, I naturally focus on the big picture, and in doing so, it occurred to me that the bills are moving in opposing directions.

On one hand, we have a bill (SB 221) that removes the *standards of instruction* on dyslexia required of specific University programs. At the same time, the legislature (through SB 1003) is suggesting statewide screening for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Change like this is sweeping. For this reason alone, I believe we need to strengthen, not weaken, our University *standards for instruction* on dyslexia, the most common reason for reading failure. University programs have not taught about dyslexia for years and are we going to trust that it will spontaneously happen with fidelity, in the midst of attempting statewide change?

Furthermore, I would like to report on testimony from other individuals who feel passionate about requiring Universities to educate teachers about dyslexia, who unfortunately couldn't be here today to testify in person. As a grassroots organization, Decoding Dyslexia remains committed to ensure all voices are heard.

A little over 72 hours ago, Decoding Dyslexia launched a Change.org petition against SB 221. In three short days we had more than 500 signatures. Remarkably, more than 100 teachers and families made the effort to include personal comments about why they support curriculum changes in Educator Preparation Programs. These comments have been submitted in testimony.

In addition, I would also like to inform you of a letter which has been written and signed by University professors nationwide who are following this bill closely and oppose SB 221. They strongly support teacher training that is aligned with an International Association on Dyslexia. I have submitted this testimony to the committee signed by these professors.

I appreciate your time and consideration and respectfully ask that you oppose SB 221.

Diana Sticker

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