

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, Members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee

RE: LD 1526 An Act to Provide Grants to Support Reading Proficiency Programming in Schools

My name is Noah Woodcock I live in Saco, I am currently a senior student at Thornton Academy. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 1526 An Act to Provide Grants to Support Reading Proficiency Programming in Schools.

I was diagnosed with Dyslexia at the age of 9 prior to my 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year of schooling. After spending a week with my grandmother, a first-grade teacher in Massachusetts, she spoke with my mother about what she felt was a delay in my reading abilities. My memories of being tested are a little fuzzy but I remember being in a room with another adult, some colored blocks, paper, and being asked to respond to a lot of questions. I did not know why I was there but it was not long after that testing that my parents spoke to me about having Dyslexia.

Prior to being diagnosed I remember school being awful for me. Everything was difficult and it annoyed me that I could not do the work like my classmates. I felt inferior to my peers and my self-esteem was at an all time low. This was during my first and second grade years, I was very young yet because of my inability to read I felt like a failure.

After my school finally recognized my diagnosis in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, I remember being pulled out of class to receive reading intervention. While I know now, I needed the intervention being pulled out of my class in front of all my peers made me feel like an outcast. I wish that my intervention could have been received in the classroom with my teacher and classmates. I also received intervention through the Dyslexia Center in Portland. While, I never enjoyed doing what I perceived as school work after school hours today I recognize that I made the most progress after I received this tutoring.

My fifth-grade year of schooling was the first time I truly started to enjoy school. I had had 2 years of intervention through the Dyslexia Center and Special Education which provided me access to learning. Just as important my teacher, Mr. Pendleton, taught class through a project-based model. I felt this style of teaching allowed me to understand what was being taught and I did not feel confused all the time. My point is it is not just about an evidence-based model of intervention it is also about providing our classroom teachers with what my mother tells me is instruction based on universal design of learning. As a Dyslexic person my brain will always process instruction differently and every single one of us learns differently. Providing our classroom teachers with the ability to differentiate their instruction means all learners will have access to learning. Mr. Pendleton unlocked my ability to understand and I felt smart in his class. I have struggled throughout high school to find classes and teachers who provide instruction to meet my learning style.

I am thankful that I had the opportunity to receive the highest level of reading interventions. I am confident if it were not for this instruction I never would have learned to read and that is a scary thought to have.

I ask this committee to please support this legislation so students like myself can experience success both in school and in life.

Thank you for your consideration.

Noah Woodcock