

Cathleen Haglund

I am Anri's mom and I am so proud of him. I would like to make a couple of points in the time remaining.

We were present last week for this committee hearing. We both learned even more about the legislative process since the last time that Anri testified. In the car on the way home, Anri asked me, "Why are people opposed to this? I don't understand." I just don't understand why people don't want to help kids read. Why is this taking so long? "

There was a lot of back and forth about the words in the bill "should" and "must." I, as a teacher, understand that schools get married to products, systems, and procedures. However, I am frightened that you would change these words for kids exhibiting decoding challenges.

Put simply, the school system SHOULD have taught my child to read.

School systems MUST teach children to read.

"Should" did not make reading happen when and how it should have. It will continue to be this way if you are not precise in the language.

Lastly, dyslexia is a learning disability. An invisible learning disability. Legislation to make these changes in law have been in the works for almost 5 years. Would you take 5 years to help students that are physically disabled? I ask you to look deep inside and try to imagine your life differently, with difficulty reading, and the many aspects of your life that it affects. Reading texts, grocery shopping, traffic signs, learning a second language as a State requirement. As a Spanish teacher, I see the frustration of students trying to learn a second language when they do not have the skills to read and write in their own language.

Reading challenges have a negative impact on a person's entire trajectory. I am grateful that Anri finally found someone to help him. The struggle has been real, and, as he stated, it continues.

Thank you for your time.