

My testimony - make eye contact. Stay on point

My name is Katherine my daughter is Kahli. She is 13, kind, helpful, beautiful, and very intelligent. You wouldn't know by looking at her that at the age of 9 she was facing depression. You wouldn't know that she was contemplating ending her life, that even now sometimes she still thinks why was she born or why doesn't God just end her life since people think she is so dumb. See at the age of 9 her teacher started telling her because she couldn't get her work done that she must be lazy. And almost every teacher since then has done the same. She has had some cheerleaders along the way, teachers and family that have supported her telling her she can make it.

At the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year I started the Kansas State School System protocol for applying for an IEP, to get her some kind of help. At that time I had no idea what dyslexia was. I just knew that my child was barely reading or writing. She wouldn't stay focused, couldn't process simple 3-5 step instructions. She was passing every grade though moving right on up through the system. At the beginning of her 4<sup>th</sup> grade year Kahli was "evaluated". She was placed in a room with only an instructor. The instructor read the test to her. To me this was not normal environment testing. Anyways, the results came back at the end of her 4<sup>th</sup> grade year that she tested average so she would not be receiving any help. But the school psychologist believed her to be Inattentive ADD and that I should get her checked out. She was however able to get tutored for the state assessments. Kahli went into 5<sup>th</sup> grade like every other kid with excitement that this was her last year of elementary school and she would be headed to Middle School. As a way to "motivate" the kids to do well during State Assessment time, Kahli's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher started naming off kids and telling them to stand up, so, they did as they were told. When she was done calling off names she turned to the rest of the class and said "ok class, take a look at these kids, these are the kids who will probably fail the state assessments. If you pass I will get you a pizza!" Kahli came home in tears. This teacher was made to apologize to Kahli but she did so, once again in front of the class. Kahli was humiliated. Leaving this nightmare amongst many others that year behind her, Kahli went on to middle school. I applied for a magnet school thinking this would be great for her. Wrong again! Any time Kahli had a question in class especially in Math or language arts, she was told to sit down and figure it out on her own, that the rest of the class was "getting it" so darn it, why couldn't she? Kahli was failing every class when I pulled her out halfway through that year. I could see she was doing the homework, it was taking her way longer that it would a typical non-dyslexic child, but she was still failing, because, the work was usually late and incorrect. I started taking Kahli to a family therapist who suggested she may have something called dyslexia. See, even at home she wasn't following what I thought to be simple tasks like household chores. I started her at a school one hour a day that would focus on her dyslexia. She has continued at the Fundamental Learning center and has come a very long way since then. I recently placed her back into the Wichita public school system, Kahli is an 8<sup>th</sup> grader now. I have once again applied for a 504 and was told even with a diagnosis of dyslexia and ADD that we would just have to wait and see what the teachers say about whether or not Kahli is paying attention in class, and if she is turning in her homework. Once again there is at least one teacher that has already called Kahli lazy and bringing attention to her every day in class if she says anything about the school work being hard. The teacher says this is complaining. The class with the teacher in question just happens to be "Literacy". A class where the students are expected to sit for 45 min and take notes, where the notes will be used on a test at the end of the week. If Kahli were already given a 504 with a diagnosis of dyslexia she wouldn't have to go through all of the nonsense she does now, she could have

copies of the notes in all classes she could have extra time on homework and tests. In fact if her teachers would have been able to recognize her dyslexia when she first started elementary school we could've saved her all of the heartache and people looking at her as if she would never amount to anything because she couldn't read or learn the same way as the "rest of the kids". Studies have shown that a child with dyslexia is 10 times more likely to commit suicide. I want to save another child from feeling this way. Won't you help us in saving another child from wanting to end their life because they feel worthless? I work with Homeless people every week, and being told by 50% of them that the reason they are on the streets is because of dyslexia. So, they end up losing jobs, homes, end up in prison. Please take careful consideration when passing this bill.