



OHIO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

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Written Testimony – House Bill 436
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Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the Senate Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 436. I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the thousands of occupational therapy providers who work in schools across our state.

My name is Erika Kemp and I am the Pediatric Special Interest Chair for the Ohio Occupational Therapy Association. I am also an Assistant Professor in the Division of Occupational Therapy within the Ohio State University School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences.

In my past practice and current academic role, I have seen the positive benefits of occupational therapy in helping children with dyslexia. For this reason, I strongly support House Bill 436 and commend Rep. Baldrige for his leadership on this important issue.

HB 436 would benefit children with dyslexia by ensuring they are screened periodically and connected with services and supports to address any issues. Specifically, the bill would enact the following positive policies—

- Require schools to administer annual dyslexia screenings;
- Require teachers and other staff to obtain certification in structured literacy;
- Establish the Ohio Dyslexia Committee to provide ongoing support and policy guidance to the Ohio Department of Education;
- Develop a Dyslexia Guidebook and other resources for educators and staff.

Taken together, the policies in HB 436 will not only help identify students who need services, but it will provide robust resources for teachers, related services providers, and other staff to support these students. Occupational therapy providers are well suited to evaluate these children and structure interventions to address dyslexia and improve overall reading and comprehension.

Included with my testimony is a 2014 article from *OT Practice Magazine*, published by the American Occupational Therapy Association. This document provides additional detail on the role of occupational therapy in serving children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

In closing, I want to thank you for your time and attention to this important issue. It is my hope that you will pass HB 436 and that it can be enacted this year.