

Senate Health Education Labor and Pensions Committee
“Developmental Perspective on Testing for Dyslexia”
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Testimony of Ms. Allyce Trapp
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Hello, my name is Allyce Trapp, and I am a senior at Louisiana State University. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having academic accommodations throughout my life. Before being diagnosed with dyslexia, I struggled with academics in kindergarten and was beginning to fail the first grade. As a consequence, I suffered from low self-esteem and was frustrated with my inability to learn. Thankfully, my mother had me tested for a learning disability, and I was diagnosed with dyslexia in first grade and began Project Read and a program called Resource in second grade. Without this diagnosis, I would not have been able to enter these programs and get the help that I needed. I watched friends who were not tested and did not get help struggle throughout their school years, which is something that could have easily been avoided.

From that point on, I started to learn and retain what I was taught thanks to the teaching methods employed. Project Read started their students back at the beginning. For example, we went over the spelling of basic words like “it,” “cat,” “sat” and so on, all things I should have learned in kindergarten. Project Read took me out of the classroom and into a separate room with other students who struggled with learning disabilities. Project Read gave me a safe and comfortable environment to learn with other students like me. The teachers used a multisensory approach to learning such as tracing our vocabulary words in trays of sand and writing information on flashcards, which I still do today. This program gave me confidence in and out of the classroom and can be accredited with shaping the student I am today.

I continued Resource upon entering high school. The Resource program offered typed notes for my classes, a quiet room with teachers on hand for assistance and extra time allotted for exams. When I went to take the ACT, I was again offered extra time and was placed in a quiet classroom where I could work at my own speed. Because I had sufficient time to take this extremely important exam, I made the score I needed to get into LSU. Now at LSU, I am registered in Disability Services, which offers me similar accommodations to those I had in high school. Thanks to the skills that Project Read gave me, I personally do not need the accommodations granted to me in college that some students do very much need.

Project Read allowed me to achieve my early academic goals and helped me become a successful student. Without Project Read, I would most likely have lost my motivation to learn. Because I was diagnosed and helped early on in my life, I was able to grow and adapt to my disability, and I am now a successful and confident college student. I am

graduating in May with a degree in Mass Communications and have plans to attend graduate school to pursue my MBA.

What can Congress do for students like me? First and foremost, I would like to stress the importance early testing for children who struggle. Second, all students with dyslexia should have access to programs like Project Read so that they do not fall behind in their studies. Finally, the public as a whole should be better informed about dyslexia and other learning disabilities. A learning disability is not a symptom of low IQ or insufficient effort. The public needs to know that learning disabilities are beyond the students' control but can successfully be treated.

My graduation from LSU and my dream of going to graduate school would never have been possible had I not been tested early and accommodated throughout my life. Thanks to the early intervention and consistent support I was provided, I have a real chance of being a highly productive member of society. I only recently became aware that not all students receive the same accommodations as me. It saddens me to think that not everyone has the same help and support that I did. If all students had the help that I did, they would have just as bright of a future as I do. So I am asking you, the members of Congress, to please give these students a chance to live without being held back by dyslexia.