

AB1369: Dear Fellow Californians

by Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Dyslexia Training Institute

Dear parents, students and anyone who works with students with dyslexia in California.

The news of AB1369 has hit social media and the response has been a bit disconcerting, to say the least. Yes, I hear you when you say you are disappointed that AB1369 was pared down and we did not get everything we wanted. What you are not hearing is that AB1369 is not done, it is just beginning and in order to make it happen the way you want it to, we need your help, not your negative comments.

Until April 22, 2015 I was a disenfranchised voter. I was uninterested in what my local politicians were doing on my behalf and really didn't think it affected me. What I witnessed both behind the scenes and during the hearing completely changed the way I view politics in the state of California. I wanted to share with you what I learned for those of you who are frustrated and believe enough hasn't been done. I am here to assure you that I have never seen a group of parents work harder for kids with dyslexia and AB1369 in a more complex political environment than we have here in the very large state of California.

First, you should know that the leaders of Decoding Dyslexia – CA use every moment they have to work on this bill. They drive to and from Sacramento on a regular basis. They hold conference calls at 9:00 at night. They email and call legislators and lobbyists. They research other legislation online for hours on end. *They neglect their own families to help your family.*

Second, it is easy to compare what is happening in California with other states that have been successful in passing laws, until you understand that California is far bigger and more complex than most other states, then you realize that that comparison is nonsensical. We have a teachers' union (CTA) that has more power than I ever imagined – and that is where your energy should be directed. Instead of passing judgement and expressing disappointment in AB1369 why don't you jump in and help DD-CA figure out how to get more people involved and vocal? Until that happens the CTA will not budge until they think there is more interest.

Third, until you are intimately involved in the process, you really have no idea how the game is played; I certainly didn't. It is a game. It is a game of understanding the different assembly and committee members and who they receive campaign donations from and how that will affect their vote. It is a matter of trying to figure out what deals are going on behind closed doors. It is knowing that things change in a matter of minutes unbeknownst to you and there are long-standing relationships in the Capitol that affect this bill.

Lastly, we need more dads to be involved. After I gave my testimony on April 22, I watched parent after parent come to the microphone and express their support for AB1369, and of all those wonderful parents, there were only 3 dads. So, this is a call for the dads to let legislators know they too care about this bill.

AB1369: Dear Fellow Californians

by Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Dyslexia Training Institute

So, before you start sharing your disappointment and criticism on social media, think about what you have done to help this bill. Do you really have the right to criticize? Have you really heard that this bill is not done? The people that read your comments have given up a lot to help you and your comments do nothing to help the bill pass.

Your fellow Californian,

Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Ed.D.