



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 1381</b>		DATE: <b>4/7/2021</b>	
COMMITTEE: <b>Elementary and Secondary Education</b>			
<b>TESTIFYING:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>arniedienoff@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/7/2021 11:52 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			
<b>I am in Full Support of this Bill. This Should and Needs to be Done!</b>			



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CARLA KEIRNS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/7/2021 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>GARY WUNDER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-874-1774</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND</b>		TITLE: <b>PRESIDENT EMERITUS</b>	
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CITY: <b>COLUMBIA</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65202</b>
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/7/2021 12:00 AM</b>	
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>NICHOLE HIBDON</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>pebkac2570@yahoo.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/7/2021 5:21 PM</b>
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\* I love lines 10-12! I fully support that provision. \* This Bill does not mention the ECC and all components - it focuses on Braille, AT, and O&M - I'd like to see a mention of the other domains of the ECC especially b/c employment, independent living and training/education are mandated in the transition plan of an IEP at age 16+ \* Anywhere NOMC is stipulated, a COMS should also be named \* Anywhere Assistive Tech instructors are stipulated, the list should always include a MO licensed TVI, a CATIS (through ACVREP) and/or a NCATB (through NFB) \* I am completely opposed to requiring educators to hold NCUEB - especially those TVIs already certified and with lifetime certification. All licensed TVIs must complete and pass at least 1 - 3 Braille courses during their preparation (line 29) - if an educator is licensed there is no need to have them complete the NLS test or the NCUEB. This provision would also require a single source provider.-Regarding certification of personnel, in the areas of mobility, braille and assistive technology-there is mainly only one certifying body named. It does not acknowledge MO state certified teachers with children with visual impairments (TVI) or national certification. As you are well aware, there is a national shortage of certified personnel as it is. The way the bill is written, MO certified TVIs would have to take additional specific braille training. In order to receive MO certification, 1-3 classes in braille and instruction of braille are required. \* This bill should include students on an IFSP and with a 504 Accommodation Plan (line 43) \* Line 57 - many students with a VI are not using technology that is the same as a sighted peer so it is pretty much impossible to expect a fair comparison of performance. \* Line 120 must include "visual" and "nonvisual" skills for orientation, mobility and wayfinding \* According to the NBPCB website today, there are zero (0) NCUEB professionals certified in MO, there is 1 NOMC professional certified in MO, there are zero (0) NCRTB professionals certified in MO, and a google search and a bit of time researching did not identify a database or information about NCATB ---> therefore, this bill includes stipulations for professionals who currently do not live or work in MO. <https://www.nbpcb.org/pages/lookup.php> \* There are currently 3 people listed in the ACVREP database on it's "verify" website as being CATIS certified professionals. <https://www.acvrep.org/verify> \* There is no provision for night-time O&M instruction or assessment \* I'd love to see Independent Educational Evaluations not have a 'cap' for the cost - kids/families can't find 'outside professionals' to conduct an IEE b/c the districts often cap the cost and/or include travel, accommodations, food, etc. into the maximum amount - ultimately leading to a family not being able to bring in an independent contractor \* Line 160 - parents should not be responsible for travel to/from O&M lessons and if they are, they should be reimbursed like the professional Respectfully- Nichole Hibdon



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ANNE SILEA</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-776-1300</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>DELTA GAMMA CENTER</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1750 S. BIG BEND BLVD</b>			
CITY: <b>ST. LOUIS</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63117</b>
EMAIL: <b>asilea@dgckids.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/6/2021 1:46 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I am writing on behalf of the Delta Gamma Center. As an organization providing specialized services to children with visual impairments, we wanted to weigh in on the BRITE Act (Blind Students' Rights to Independence, Training, and Education Act) We believe this is an important piece of legislation that has the potential to benefit children with visual impairments. Unfortunately, we are concerned that the language, as written, may unintentionally delay or reduce services for children with visual impairments. Our main concern relates to new provisions regarding who is allowed to provide braille instruction. Currently, Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) are one of the main providers of braille instruction. Based on the language in this bill, TVI's would no longer be allowed to provide braille instruction, unless they had a specific certification listed in the bill. According to the National Blindness Professional Certification Board, there are currently no providers with this certification in Missouri. Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) already have degrees in the field of visual impairment, that includes specific training in braille instruction, and are certified by the state of Missouri. We currently have a shortage of TVIs in Missouri and limiting the pool of qualified professionals, could result in children not receiving braille instruction. In addition, we have other concerns with the bill including:

- The bill requires a designation for a student's "primary" learning media, however children with a visual impairment often rely on multiple learning media (e.g. braille, large print, assisted technology)
- A lack of clarity between the roles and responsibilities of Teachers of the Visually Impaired and general education teachers (e.g. TVI's are responsible for teaching braille, general education teachers are responsible for teaching subject matter). We believe all of these items can be easily addressed with minor adjustments to the language and we would be more than happy to provide information or assistance in addressing these concerns. Thank you to the bill sponsor and the members of the committee for their attention and interest in ensuring children with visual impairments receive all the services they need to succeed.

Sincerely, Anne Silea, Director of Community Engagement Delta Gamma Center



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DR. KARLA ARNOLD</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>816-217-7479</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>MISSOURI COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION</b>		TITLE: <b>DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION AND LEARNING</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>4324 NE 59TH TERRACE</b>			
CITY: <b>KANSAS CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>64119</b>
EMAIL: <b>karla.arnold@mo-case.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/4/2021 11:07 AM</b>	
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1. The statement that no student shall be denied instruction in braille reading and writing solely because the student has some remaining vision is in direct violation of the IEP process as outlined by IDEA. The IEP team and vision experts must be allowed to make this determination. This is an annual school obligation. Not all students need braille instruction in order to make progress on IEP goals and objectives. 2. This statement should be clarified as parents might read it to mean many different things. "LEA's shall not impose any preclusions or limitations of a student to received instruction in orientation and mobility services in and around the home, school, or community setting." The worrisome part is "in and around the home."3. Will teachers who are already certified be grandfathered in regarding the DESE adopted assessment procedure to assess competencies which are consistent with standards adopted by NLSBP? 4. Shouldn't university level coursework suffice in regards the certification and renewal process for educator hired to teach accessible AT?5. It is already extremely difficult to find teachers of the visually impaired. A new DESE adopted assessment procedures to assess competencies which are consistent with standards adopted by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLSBP), Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., will make this even more difficult. Additionally, this certification is for braille transcriptionists. Teachers of the the visually impaired to not need this level of braille knowledge to create books, documents, etc.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KEVIN HOLLINGER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>email@blindnesspro.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/7/2021 8:33 AM</b>
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I love the fundamental intent of this Bill and support most of it. However, there are some glaring issue which must be discussed an amended prior to a vote and adoption. I am writing as a small business owner of a consulting company working with/for individuals with low vision and blindness. I am also a full-time public school educator of 22 years with multiple certifications across the field of visual impairments. First, this document is inconsistent regarding the stipulation and certification/licensure of the professionals educating children with visual impairments. This document does not include the Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist (through ACVREP) and it does not include Licensed Teachers of the Visually Impaired. Anywhere the NCATB is listed, it should be accompanied by CATIS and TVI. Second, this document does not consistently identify NOMC and COMS as the certified professionals working in the domain of Orientation & Mobility. Anywhere either are stated, the other must be included. Third, this Bill addresses Braille, Assistive Technology and O&M, but it neglects specifying the other domains of Expanded Core Curriculum (such as career exploration, adapted daily living skills, etc.). A simple statement guaranteeing all facets of the ECC will ensure all children receive access to the instruction. Fourth, much of this Bill centers around the NBPCB certifications. However, according to the NBPCB website for verifying certified professionals across NOMC, NCRTB, NCUEB and NCATB, there is only 1 person in MO at this time. However, as mentioned in #2 above, the Bill neglects to consistently identify TVI (which likely numbers well over 120 professionals in the state) and COMS (over 60) and CATIS (3). Fifth, I am wholeheartedly opposed to the requirement for every professional to obtain NCUEB certification. This is for so many reasons. One primary reason is that all TVIs were required to enroll in and pass 1-3 Braille courses during their university preparation program and the State of MO requires this for graduation and licensure. Second, the NCUEB has no certified professionals in MO at this time (there is 1 in IL, 0 in KY, 1 in KS, and 0 in OK as a comparison). I'm also concerned this provision would require currently licensed professionals or those with life-time certificates to go back and seek this certification. No other certified teaching position i(say Math, Foreign Language or History) in the educational system would do this - there is no way the State could nor should manage this provision. Fifth, this Bill does not include Individual Family Service Plans (IFSP) for children in birth-3 programming nor does it include students on 504 Accommodation Plans. This bill must include children with visual impairments from birth through 12th grade and include all available Plans in the educational system. Sixth, O&M instruction must occur in the home, school and/or community environments (as mandated by the ECC discussed above) - but this legislation does not include mandates for daytime and night time instruction, consultation and/or assessment. Many, many children need access to instruction during the day and at night to ensure their skills are not only commensurate with age-appropriate travel but to ensure all strengths and challenges are identified and targeted as needed. Seventh, parents should not bear the burden for transporting students to/from O&M lessons in the community, before/after school or on the weekends.

If they do, they should be reimbursed for mileage at a minimum. Eighth, the Bill does not full address assessment in Braille, AT and O&M sufficiently. Most importantly, I strongly believe the "cap" on expenditures must be lifted to help families/Districts identify professionals willing to provide Independent Educational Evaluations or the typical initial or re-evaluations across the ECC -- so many children cannot get an assessment from a certified professional b/c Districts offer such little in terms of compensation especially when the professional is coming from outside their area or state. There are other items which should be clarified or expanded but I hope my feedback demonstrates this Bill is not ready to be voted upon nor passed. A few years ago, a similar Bill regarding Braille Literacy went to the floor but the authors of the Bill neglected many of the concerns listed above and the Bill was killed. Additional collaboration and revision is required at this time - but - as I said initially, this Bill has a wonderful foundation of intent and should be improved upon.





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<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>TERESA GREEN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>tgreen@sgdragons.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/7/2021 1:44 PM</b>
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Hello. I am reaching out as a Director of Student Services that oversees Special Education services. Although I appreciate the thoughtfulness of this bill, I would like to express the following concerns: -- The bill does not address the Expanded Core Curriculum which are functional and transition skills (See link here-<https://www.wonderbaby.org/sites/wonderbaby2.perkinsdev1.org/files/expanded-core-curriculum.pdf>)--Regarding certification of personnel, in the areas of mobility, braille and assistive technology-there is mainly only one certifying body named. It does not acknowledge MO state certified teachers with children with visual impairments (TVI) or national certification. As you are well aware, there is a national shortage of certified personnel as it is. The way the bill is written, MO certified TVIs would have to take additional specific braille training. In order to receive MO certification, 1-3 classes in braille and instruction of braille are required. Especially rural districts are struggling with securing TVIs and O&M services under the current guidelines so this will make it even more difficult to find someone who can provide services in this low incidence disability.--A colleague of mine did some research, the NBPCB website (which offers certification named in the legislation) today, there are zero (0) NCUEB professionals certified in MO (braille), there is 1 NOMC (mobility) professional certified in MO, there are zero (0) NCRTB (assistive technology) professionals certified in MO, and a google search and a bit of time researching did not identify a database or information about NCATB. This is concerning with almost nonexistent staff for the whole state. Thank you for your consideration and service.



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<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>WANDA V FIELDER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>wanda.fielder@raytownschools.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>4/6/2021 4:57 PM</b>
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There is currently a shortage of Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) and Orientation and Mobility Specialists. This bill will make it even worse. Universities that offer programs in these areas have braille courses, with competency tests, as part of their graduation requirement. In addition, the state test for teaching VI assesses braille. Certification in braille by the Library of Congress is suited for those who wish to create textbooks, graphics, worksheets or other published items in braille and is called braille transcription. TVIs are not creating these materials and in addition, have software to translate print to braille. Also please understand the following regarding braille instruction:-If a child has low vision and does not have a risk of deteriorating vision in the future, print and auditory media, with accommodations, are the best option. Children with sight often do not learn braille as efficiently because they know they can see print...(there is research on this).-Furthermore, the child will lose time in the classroom and fall behind his or her peers while being pulled for braille instruction, which is usually several hours a week. If the student can read print with accommodations or equipment then he or she will not lose classroom instruction.-There are a number of video magnifiers for students to see print as well as accessibility features on computers and screen reading software.-We require every district (we serve 10) that has a student learning braille to hire a full-time brailist who transcribes class material, produces tactile graphics and supports what the TVI has taught the student. While in this role, we require the brailist to take a braille transcription course. There are several available. Will the state provide districts with additional funding to recruit and support salaries for brailists? Please heed the advice of TVIs in the field who know our jobs and how to determine if a student needs braille. Spend time with a TVI while she works and learn what we do and how we do it. I would be more than happy for any legislature to visit our program.