



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 941		DATE: 2/19/2025	
COMMITTEE: Elementary and Secondary Education			
TESTIFYING: ☒ IN SUPPORT OF ☐ IN OPPOSITION TO ☐ FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DENA PETRIE		PHONE NUMBER:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: dglathaar@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 7:43 PM

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**Reading Recovery is an ineffective method of teaching and has been banned in many countries.
Literacy rates are going down and Reading Recovery needs to be taken out of curriculums.**



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: EMERY WAKEFIELD		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: utahraptor9000@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 12:35 PM
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3 cuing methods like Reading Recovery do not teach children how to read, and are an ineffective waste of educational tax dollars. We need to focus on proven, effective teaching methods that will allow Missouri's future generations the gift, privilege, social, and economical advantages that literacy provides. I love Missouri, and I am tired of our education system making us look like an embarrassment to the rest of the nation.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: GARRETT WEBB		PHONE NUMBER: 219-229-1104	
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Aligned is a nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of business and civic leaders committed to improving access to career-based education and high quality early childhood education in Kansas and Missouri. We believe in research based models of instruction and ensuring student and resource first policies are in place for all learners.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: JORDAN ZAKERY		PHONE NUMBER: 217-358-2741	
REPRESENTING: EXCELINED		TITLE: LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR- EXCELINED IN ACTION	
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CITY: INDIANAPOLIS		STATE: IN	ZIP: 46202
EMAIL: jordan@excelined.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 3:27 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Dear Education Committee, My name is Jordan Zakery, Legislative Director for ExcelinEd in Action. Our organization works with state lawmakers and partner organizations to pass legislation that empowers families with educational opportunity, prepares students for college and career, prioritizes early literacy grounded in the science of reading, expands innovation and strengthens school performance.? I am writing to express ExcelinEd in Action's support for HB 941, which would strengthen Missouri's ongoing approach to literacy and improve reading proficiency. In 1992, Missouri 4th grade readers outperformed their peers nationally by half a grade level and their Mississippi peers by more than two grade levels. In 2024, Missouri 4th grade readers performed below the Nation and more than half grade level worse than Mississippi. HB 941 would help position more struggling readers to success by banning the three-cueing method from reading instruction and curriculum. While banning three-cueing in the classroom is a critical step, extending the ban to remove the method from educator preparation programs would further strengthen the positive impact on Missouri's readers. Three cueing is a flawed and harmful teaching practice that encourages students to guess words based on pictures and clues rather than sounding words out. This method undermines the science of reading and leads to poor outcomes. By adopting this ban, Missouri would join eighteen states that have banned three-cueing, including Louisiana. As demonstrated by the 2024 NAEP results. Louisiana is leading the way in growth on 4th-grade reading performance, showing standout gains in both 2022 and 2024, making it the state with the greatest proficiency gains since 2019. In addition, in 2022, Louisiana extended their Comprehensive early literacy policy and High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) efforts, becoming the second state in the nation to ban the use of three-cueing materials. We are grateful for your leadership and urge you to pass HB 941 to ensure all children in Missouri are proficient readers by the end of third grade. Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this important policy. Respectfully, Jordan Zakery, Legislative Director, Midwest ExcelinEd in Action



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KATHRYN BONNEY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
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EMAIL: ryn.bonney@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: In-Person		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 7:46 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Good afternoon, my name is Ryn Bonney. I am the mother of three dyslexic children, and the founder of The Dyslexia Tutoring Project. I am here today not only as a parent but as an advocate for the 1.24 million Missourians with dyslexia and the 12,168 dyslexic children living in the City of Saint Louis. HB 941 is not just helpful; HB 941 is vital to saving Dyslexic lives. Dyslexic children cannot learn to read without explicit phonetic instruction, and this bill acknowledges that reality. The current three-cueing system encourages guessing, not reading, and Dyslexic children are suffering because of it. In 1948, my dyslexic grandfather left school at age 14, unable to read, believing he was unintelligent. This misunderstanding created serious mental health issues that plagued him throughout his life. Decades later, my children face similar struggles because Missouri's education system still fails to meet their needs. None of my three children are legally recognized as dyslexic due to outdated definitions, and only one has an IEP after six years of fighting. My youngest was even denied support despite a documented learning disability. This bill ensures no other child is forced to carry the emotional burden of a failing system. Without proper instruction, dyslexic children are locked out of comprehension and academic success. My children are aware of their struggles and actively mask their distress daily. They lie to their teachers, pretending to read so that they can pass as "normal". The internalized disruption impacts their mental health. They need phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension—the core components this bill guarantees for all Missouri students. Dyslexia is genetic, yet the system asks dyslexic parents to navigate a complex process to advocate for their children. This is unjust. Fifty percent of incarcerated Missourians are believed to be dyslexic, often tracing their struggles back to early school failures. This bill is a first step to preventing such outcomes and ensuring every child has access to quality reading instruction. Passing HB 941 is the bare minimum Missouri can do. It will finally provide Tier One instruction for dyslexic learners and move us toward a system where 20% of our students are no longer excluded. The dyslexic child ignored today could become the inmate you pay to incarcerate tomorrow. It doesn't have to be this way. Missouri can and must do better. Thank you for your time and consideration.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LARA WAKEFIELD		PHONE NUMBER:	
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EMAIL: wakefieldconsultationservices@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 8:57 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

My name is Dr. Lara Wakefield and I'm an advocate who works with families in Missouri who have children with disabilities to access their rights to participate in public schools, places of public accommodation, court systems, justice systems, and healthcare. I'm emailing to support House Bill 941, which is crucial legislation to begin addressing the infrastructure of the growing literacy crisis in the Show Me state. Why Do We Need This Bill to Become a Law? In case you are not aware, literacy rates in the state of Missouri over the past 2 decades have been dropping, with a significant plummet the past 10 years. This has been demonstrated on the NAEP scores and other assessments. One of the core reasons we have seen this occur is due to the ineffective reading instruction methods being used in our public schools called 3 cueing techniques, like Reading Recovery (Marie Clay) or "MSV". These methods tell students to "look at the picture" and "make a guess of what word would fit there". They do not use systematic phonemic awareness and phonics techniques. Reading Recovery is a widespread, deeply entrenched method across Missouri school districts that started in the mid-1990s. School districts that use Reading Recovery spend an average of an additional \$10,000 per student on Reading Recovery annually for around 0.5-2% of students in the district. For a district the size of Columbia Public Schools (CPS) with 18,000 students, this is a range of \$500,000 to \$2 million expenditure per year, depending on how many students are in the program. Some Personal Background: I was a co-investigator conducting three USDOE grant-funded research projects on language and literacy for 5 years at the University of Cincinnati from 2004-2009. This is where I completed my PhD program with Dr. Wayne Secord who is a nationally renowned researcher in language and literacy development in children. We worked in cooperation with Ohio State and University of Central Florida. Ohio was a leader in recognizing the detrimental effects of Reading Recovery early on, but could not effectively stop school districts from using it, no matter how often researchers showed the problems to administrators or school boards. Finally, Columbus, Ohio, became the first district to sound the alarm bells in the U.S. in the mid-1990s to prohibit it locally. What We Learned: What we learned in our research was that 3 cueing methods, like Reading Recovery, were not a beneficial intervention for children who need explicit, systematic reading instruction in the five areas of reading, or what is known as SOR (Science of Reading based on National Reading Panel's research, 2000). We discovered that Reading Recovery lacks instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics instruction which are 2 crucial tenets of reading instruction. It was not helpful to struggling readers or students with disabilities. Furthermore, Reading Recovery was targeted inside Title I buildings to the lowest academically performing first grade students. It created what is known as the Matthew effect: The poor readers got poorer, while the good readers got better. Ohio went on to pass a law, last legislative session, to ban 3 cueing methods in their schools. Opponents of Reading Recovery learned that the only way they could stop the detrimental effects of this technique, was to pass

legislation that expressly prohibited it. Otherwise, districts will continue to use it, even when they know it's not based on the Science of Reading. Ohio joined 18 other states who have banned 3 cueing methods from being used in their public schools the past few years: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Reading Recovery Banned in Australia and New Zealand: The origin of the method Other places that have mostly banned Reading Recovery are: Australia and New Zealand. These are the countries where the founder of Reading Recovery, Marie Clay, started the ineffective practice. Her own native country has banned the method and removed all funding for it. Why did this happen? Because Australia's literacy rate plummeted once this method took root in the country. Furthermore, they saw the massive expense of the program that resulted in minimal to adverse outcomes. The Profit Scheme: Spreading Illiteracy to districts across the state: To make matters worse, we have certain districts, like Columbia Public Schools who have teachers who become "Trainers" for Reading Recovery. Then, CPS sends these teachers to other districts and charges fees to those districts, so CPS teachers spread these ineffective methods across the state. And CPS makes income from it. Reading Recovery is a profit scheme at this point. Ethically, I don't feel great as a tax-payer about my school district profiting off these other district's funds for this ineffective method. These are mainly rural, poverty districts who can barely function as it is. This is especially concerning now that the state is already paying for every district in Missouri to have LTRS training. This "trainer" situation is only feeding the Reading Recovery pyramid scam. It's like CPS is profiting off poorer districts' illiteracy and making them as low performing as CPS. Columbia should be part of the literacy solution, not ground zero for perpetuating the problem of illiteracy in our state. Related issues: Teacher burn-out and School to prison pipeline: When students struggle with reading, they have high potential for an increase in behaviors at school, related to frustrations comprehending everything going on in academics. This has been extensively discussed by researchers and most recently by Hildebrand Pelzer, III. He is the principal in Pennsylvania (another state that banned 3 Cueing) who began to organize schools inside prisons to teach incarcerated youth how to read. He discovered that many had ineffective reading instructions without phonics, dyslexia, lack of access to books, and parents who could not read/demonstrate reading because they had ineffective reading instruction. He said, "The school to prison pipeline runs right through the reading classrooms." -Hildebrand Pelzer, III. When students have certain frustration behaviors, this can lead to children being restrained, secluded and suspended which perpetuates further trauma for both students and school staff. It leads to burn-out for teachers. It leads to students entering into the juvenile system. The average literacy rate of incarcerated individuals is at about a 4th grade level in our state. That is no coincidence. If we can turn the tide to rid our state of Reading Recovery and begin to provide effective reading instruction, we can probably start to address many other related issues. Thank you for considering this important information about the future of Missouri. Sincerely, Lara Wakefield



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LAUREN HARRISON		PHONE NUMBER:	
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EMAIL: lauren.harrison@att.net		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 8:32 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARISA HAGLER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: marisahagler@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 12:51 PM
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I am writing in support of stopping Reading Recovery being used in Missouri schools. Recent studies show it provides minimal effect in the short term and no effect or detrimental long term effects. Other countries that have used it have called it a failed experiment. Reading sets up students for long term success in school and life. Implementing this program is failing them. Only around 27% of fourth grade students and 26% of eighth grade students in Missouri are proficient in reading. We must do better for our future generation.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHELLE RIBAUDO		PHONE NUMBER:	
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EMAIL: mribaudo@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 3:26 PM

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The 3-cueing system needs to be banned from schools and replaced with proven methods. Statistics show that this 3 cue system is not effective.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C."HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
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ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 11:54 PM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CHERYL STEPHENS		PHONE NUMBER:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: cls4n6@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 4:57 PM
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This is pedologic insanity to prohibit one effective teaching methodology in favor of a singular one. It should not be mandated by legislation but rather left to the professionalism of the district educators and professionals. While current research suggests that three-cueing is not in favor, historically it has been used effectively for some students. The decision should remain in the hands of the instructors who know the student and not a blanket prohibition by a legislator.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: CRAIG CASON		PHONE NUMBER: 417-209-1086	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: OZARK R-VI SCHOOLS		TITLE: ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT	
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EMAIL: craigcarson@ozarktigers.org		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 10:51 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

The Ozark School District thanks Representative Lewis for his desire to ensure each public school child in the state of Missouri gets good reading instruction. We completely agree with him. Each child absolutely **DESERVES** the best reading and literacy instruction. Albeit the best intentions of the bill, the Ozark School District opposes HB 941 for two specific reasons. First, the legislators have already enacted reading bills over the last few years. Ozark School personnel have been at the table to help write and craft language around those bills. I currently serve on the state's literacy advisory board to DESE. The guiding light for the literacy bills have been two fold - create better early literacy education to ensure all kids read while still allowing school district instructional choice. This bill chips away at both. It takes instructional and curricular decision-making away from the locally elected school board. School boards were designed as the most grass roots representation - parents, grandparents, community members, business leaders serving to represent the will of the community for its most precious gifts, our kids. Board members in Ozark (and around the state) are in our schools weekly on an informal basis and doing board tours and watching instruction formally each month of the school year. They should be the ones who guide local schools regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment in relation to literacy, numeracy, social studies, science, counseling, and electives. They have a very important position across the state and should be allowed to carry out the community's wishes. Second, since schools have implemented LETRS and the other resources DESE has deployed as a result of SB 681, literacy instruction has changed. Districts are working hard to help all students read and write. In my own Orton-Gillingham training I took two years ago, I was taught to make sure students are paying attention to all the letters and syllables, the onset, the rhyme... Teachers will ask a student when decoding words to look at the word or syllable. We ask questions like: What do you notice? What patterns do you see? What sound does that letter make? We are making sure students are visually monitoring the structure of the words. We are also continually asking students to look at the print. During sentence making we are monitoring students' ability to structurally write. As we teach reading (decoding, phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary) teachers must attend to comprehension. To teach comprehension, teachers ask students if something makes sense or not? What is the meaning of what you just read? Those kinds of questions are not "three-cueing systems" questions, they are central to teaching reading in the science of reading or any method we choose. We adjust our instruction for each learner while following the science of reading Scarborough's Reading Rope. As well intentioned as this bill is, it is unnecessary due to the overreach into district curricular decisions but more importantly it impedes on teachers using the current DESE model of reading instruction. We need teachers to monitor and adjust instruction to each individual child based on what they know about a students' use of meaning, structure and syntax within the 5 pillars of reading -

phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Thus, Ozark opposes this bill.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JULIE MCDONALD		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: mcoopjam@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 7:33 AM
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I am a reading specialist in Missouri. I taught in the classroom for 12 years and have been a reading specialist for 13 years. The three queuing system provides instructional balance because it helps support meaning and semantic with the phonological part. When we teach phonics only and cannot in bed meaning and semantic within text, it is incomplete. When first and second grade students are learning to read they need to incorporate meaning (from the pictures) to help cross reference what the word could be at point of difficulty.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KAREN THOM		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: karenthom51@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 10:21 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am a retired reading specialist who has spent my career teaching struggling readers using a variety of methods and programs. I also taught graduate reading courses to teachers. My graduate and post graduate work in literacy and years of teaching taught me that the teacher's expertise and knowledge of the principles of reading instruction are keys to teaching children to read. I was involved in the Reading Success Plan legislation (SB 681) which passed in May of 2022 as part of an omnibus bill. I am opposed to House Bill No. 941 for the following reasons: 1) Districts would lose local control of reading instruction and intervention decisions if legislation bans specific items of instruction. 2) There is a misunderstanding that the "three-cueing system" is an instructional model or method. Instead, it refers to information the brain uses when engaged in reading for meaning. It is not a teaching strategy or encouragement to guess. It does include direct, explicit, and systematic instruction in phonics. 3) Banning the use of meaning, structure, and visual sources of information in reading instruction would limit comprehension instruction for children. Scarborough's Reading Rope, a model used in Science of Reading and LETRS training, weaves in language comprehension strands (semantics/meaning and syntax/structure) with word recognition strands (graphophonemic/visual) when showing the complexity of the reading process. If MSV is banned, teachers would be afraid to ask a child if something they misread made sense or demonstrate how to try an alternative pronunciation of a word if the first attempt wasn't meaningful in the context of the sentence. 4) In his 2024 blog Dr. Timothy Shanahan, a Science of Reading advocate, said he opposes legislative bans on the three-cueing system. While he does not support the "three-cueing system", Shanahan said "...these laws and regulations are more likely to undermine quality instruction than to encourage it." 5) All reading difficulties are not the same. Some students have a difficult time decoding words. Some students can decode well, yet lack comprehension of what they read. Some students have trouble reading fluently. Some students may not hear all sounds the way others do. Students can have weak areas in vocabulary and/or background knowledge. Professional educators need to be able to adjust instruction to meet the needs of each reader and decide the emphasis to be placed on semantics (M), syntax (S), graphophonic information (V), vocabulary, background knowledge, or other reading components. 6) Section 170.014, RSMo. was passed in May of 2022 as part of Senator Cindy O'Laughlin's SB No. 681 in an omnibus bill. Before 2022 "Reading Success Plan" legislation went through years of debate, negotiation, and defeat. In 2022, a group of eleven women senators worked across the aisle and with the education groups, administrators, professional educators, parents, and dyslexia advocates to craft a bill that became law. If the language of HB No. 941 had been included, this legislation may not have passed. In conclusion, I urge you to not pass HB 941 out of committee and keep section 170.014, RSMo as enacted in 2022. Let local school districts make these instructional decisions. Sincerely, Karen Thom, MSED Reading Specialist MNEA, ILA, MRTA, RRCNA member



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARSHA H. WILSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: jimarwilson@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2025 4:14 PM
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I am a retired reading specialist from the Jefferson City School District. I have been informed that HB 941 would ban the use of the "three cueing system" model of instruction (MSV). In banning the three-cueing system you would be teaching the students to read by guessing. The brain automatically uses these three-cues when it is engaged in reading. We want every child to read for meaning. All reading problems are not the same. Professional educators need to be able to adjust instruction to the individual students. A child uses "in the head processes" as they read which include meaning, structure and syntax, and visual cues. Given the teaching experience and knowledge I have, I OPPOSE HB 941. Marsha Wilson, Retired Reading Specialist, Jefferson City School District



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: OTTO FAJEN		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-3202	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI NEA		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 1810 E. ELM ST.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: PERRY GORRELL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE: CHIEF OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS	
ADDRESS: 205 JEFFERSON ST.			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65201
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2025 12:00 AM	
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			