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Chairman Lamar Smith and Rep. Julia Brownley,

Thank you again for the privilege to address the Science, Space, and Technology Committee last year in your hearing about Science of Dyslexia. As a physician, I have all too many memories of sitting by an ailing child's bedside, wishing so desperately that we had the knowledge to help that child. As a physician I know the power of science and how once new knowledge becomes available we act quickly, indeed, race to put that knowledge to good use. We want to close that knowledge gap and improve the lives of the affected children.

As I testified, dyslexic children can learn to read and must be taught to read. It is imperative that teachers and parents learn about the powerful science of dyslexia, know how to identify dyslexia early on and to provide evidence-based methods to teach dyslexic children to read. We must not give up on teaching reading and limit a child's future options.

Dyslexia differs markedly from all other learning disabilities. Dyslexia is very specific and scientifically validated: we know its prevalence, cognitive and neurobiological origins, symptoms, and effective, evidence-based interventions. Learning disabilities is a general term referring to a range of difficulties which have not yet been delineated or scientifically validated. Learning disabilities are comparable to what in medicine are referred to as 'infectious' diseases, while dyslexia is akin to being diagnosed with a strep throat – a highly specific disorder in which the causative agent and evidence-based treatment are both known and validated.

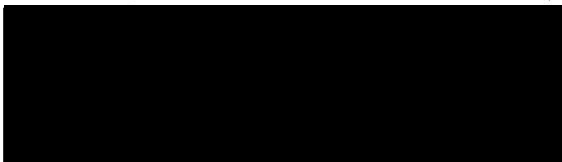
Education must, and can be, aligned with science. We must ensure that scientific knowledge is translated into policy and practice and that ignorance and injustice do not prevail. We know better, we must act better. I cannot look into the face of one more child who has lost faith in himself and the world, I cannot look into the face of a child's father who is desperately trying to hold back tears; I cannot hear once again about how a school told a mother, 'we do not believe in dyslexia.'

With my testimony before your committee in mind, I have reviewed and wholeheartedly support and endorse H.R. 3033, the Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act. The bipartisan READ Act puts rightful focus on the specific need to address the problem with the large population of Americans who have dyslexia (an estimated 1 in 5 people) and takes much-needed action to provide scientifically-proven and practical applications to identify and

overcome dyslexia. The READ Act will help to put knowledge (the science of dyslexia) into action more quickly than it would otherwise.

Everyone who is a parent, teacher, or researcher working with a dyslexic child should support H.R. 3033, the READ Act. If I may be of assistance to the Congressional Dyslexia Caucus or the Science Committee in any way to help this legislation become law, please let me know how I may help.

Sincerely,

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Sally Shaywitz, MD
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