



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM**

BILL NUMBER: <b>HB 2150</b>		DATE: <b>3/8/2022</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>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ANNE SILEA</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>314-503-5616</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>DELTA GAMMA CENTER</b>		TITLE:	
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>3/7/2022 9:30 AM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

I am writing on behalf of the Delta Gamma Center, an organization serving children with visual impairments, to support House Bill 2150. Delta Gamma Center worked with Rep Shields and a small workgroup made up of vision professionals, school district administrators, consumers, parents, and representatives of organizations serving those with visual impairments, to develop the language in the BRITE Act and we hope you will support it! House Bill 2150 improves the learning opportunities for children with visual impairment, by • Providing clear definitions of terms• Maintaining the decision making role of IEP team and adding a role for IFSP team• Ensuring that 504 plans address any equipment, accommodations, and modifications for students with visual impairments• Adding language to ensure that instruction and goals for children with visual impairments are in line with those expected of their peers, based on age and intellectual ability • Providing more flexibility regarding mobility services and allowing for nighttime instruction as needed• Limiting costs and barriers to families related to assistive technology and orientation and mobility services• Expanding professionals credentialed to serve children with visual impairments and explicitly names Teachers of the Visually Impaired as individuals qualified to provide instruction in braille and assistive technology We believe this bill and the amendment offered by Rep Shields will benefit children with visual impairments and we hope you will support them. Thank you for your 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>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>ARNIE C. AC DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>arniedienoff@yahoo.com</b>		ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>	SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 11:50 PM</b>

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**I am in Full Support of this Bill and It's Intent to Promote and Assist Blind Students with the Best Educational Opportunities and Resources Possible.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>CARLA CHRISTINE KEIRNS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>carlakeirns@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/7/2022 11:15 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

My name is Carla Keirns. I am a parent in Kansas City, Missouri. Our son Russell is a second grader who is legally blind. In the morning when he starts the school day, his vision is 20/200, but it gets steadily worse over the course of the day, until it reaches 20/500 to 20/1000 by the end of the school day and when it's time for homework. When we started his IEP process when he was 2, we knew that the "Braille provision" says in the Missouri Statutes Title XI, 167.225 "All students shall receive instruction in braille reading and writing as part of their individualized education plan unless the individual education program team determines, after an evaluation of a student's reading and writing skills, needs, and appropriate reading and writing media, including an evaluation of the student's future needs for instruction in braille or the use of braille, that instruction in braille or the use of braille is not appropriate. No student shall be denied instruction in braille reading and writing solely because the student has some remaining vision." This language mirrors the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Despite this presumption in state and federal law, our school district team was unaware of this, and initially argued that even though he was legally blind, our son did not need to learn Braille. We brought the opinions of three experts, who after evaluating him concluded that he needed Braille, to our meeting when he was entering kindergarten. There was still resistance. Once we hired a lawyer and they brought their own lawyer, they agreed that he could learn Braille. The initial proposal was to teach it to him 90 minutes per week, even as his peers had direct reading instruction 90 minutes per day, and indirect print exposure and support in its use for 6.5 hours per day. In 2000 Alan Koenig and M. Cay Holbrook published what has become the standard study of quality Braille instruction for new readers, which found that 2 hours of instruction per day is needed to learn the Braille code and develop fluency in reading. (Koenig and Holbrook, 2000, Ensuring High-Quality Instruction for Students in Braille Literacy Programs, Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, 94 (11): 677-694. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0145482X0009401102>) While we could afford to hire him a tutor, we had to fit lessons in before school because it is impossible to get the focused attention of a tired kindergartener after a full day of school, and could only fit in a total of 5 hours per week. Ultimately, he finally learned the entire Braille code when we pulled him out of virtual instruction during the pandemic to work 2 hours per day with a private teacher for 6 months, exactly what the research-based literature said would be needed. This intensity of service is only necessary for 1-3 years, just as intensive instruction is needed in kindergarten through second grade for students to learn print. All kids deserve to learn to read. The law already says so. But we need the clarifications in this law to increase the chances that this promise becomes a reality.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DAVID BAKER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>Dbaker@mo-at.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 9:19 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**RE: Support for HB 2150, BRITE Act** The Missouri Assistive Technology Council (MoAT), which oversees the states federally funded Assistive Technology Act Program, is writing in support of HB 2150, the BRITE Act. Passage of the BRITE Act is vital in improving the learning opportunities of children with visual impairments and in improving the provision of related services. The primary elements of the bill that garner our support include: • The emphasis on assistive technology and related services, including language addressing the transporting of assistive devices to and from school or the provision of duplicate assistive technology in the student's home • The requirement that all students shall receive instruction in braille reading and writing as part of their education plan, unless an assessment and the IEP team deems it not necessary. • The provision of orientation and mobility instruction provided at a sufficient level to equip student's with age-appropriate tools, techniques and nonvisual skills to navigate in and around their home, school and community environments. • The notice to LEAs to anticipate, plan for, develop, procure and maintain electronic and information technology compliant with established ICT accessibility standards. We also find noteworthy the individuals who composed the bill's related workgroup. We are familiar with and highly respect each of the members, their viewpoints, and the entities they represent. Missouri Assistive Technology works closely with school districts and providers across the state to provide assistive technology devices, services and funding to help address the needs of students with visual impairments. We know the dedication to these students is there on the part of districts and that the will to succeed is present in the students. The BRITE Act enhances services, provides clarity, and establishes goals that will enhance, support and be instrumental in further ensuring high quality educational opportunities. Our hope for the successful passage of this bill is high and our support strong. Please feel free to let us know we can provide additional information. Sincerely, David D. Baker, Director Missouri Assistive Technology (816) 655-6707 Dbaker@mo-at.org



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>DR. JAY S EPSTEIN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>jayepstein@att.net</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/4/2022 11:25 AM</b>

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**As a pediatrician, and a parent of a child who is blind, I support any legislation that facilitates equal educational opportunities for this population.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>GARY WUNDER</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KATHY HURLEY</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>KEVIN HOLLINGER</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>636-578-0124</b>	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: <b>HOLLINGER CONSULTING, LLC</b>		TITLE: <b>TEACHER OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED, CERTIFIED O&amp;M SP</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>285 CALLAWAY RIDGE DRIVE</b>			
CITY: <b>DEFIANCE</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>63341</b>
EMAIL: <b>email@blindnesspro.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/4/2022 10:10 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I fully support the BRITE ACT for the betterment and assurance of instruction for, evaluation of, and consultation with children and families experiencing vision loss. I am the owner and operator of a consulting company working with individuals with visual impairments. The BRITE ACT provides legislative teeth to help families secure services for their children from highly-qualified, certified professionals. The BRITE ACT closes many loop holes that school districts often take as a result of inherent challenges in educating children with a visual impairment. The incorporation and explanation of the Expanded Core Curriculum is crucial and must continue to be promoted for all children. This legislation will likely serve as a catalyst for other states seeking to promote the welfare and education of children with visual impairments. Therefore, I fully support the BRITE ACT and Representative Shield's amendment!!!!





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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>LUCINDA HALL</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>darinlucy@att.net</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/4/2022 12:28 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**My son is visually impaired and received services through the Lee's Summit School District with a visually impaired teacher and orientation and mobility. All districts small and large should have these services. These services should also transfer over to those that would like to go on to a 2 year degree college or a 4 year university. Every person with a visual impairment should have every right as a normal sighted peer.**



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>MAURINE SACHS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>maurinefnp@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/7/2022 6:31 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I urge you to support the BRITE ACT. My son Monroe is a 13 year old middle school student. He has low vision. When we are in a crowd Monroe holds tight to me. Sometimes I do worry what the school day is like for him. I know this ACT will support Monroe and other children like him at school. Thank you for considering. Sincerely Maurine



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>REGISTERED LOBBYIST:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>OTTO FAJEN</b>		PHONE NUMBER: <b>573-634-3202</b>	
REPRESENTING: <b>MISSOURI NEA</b>		TITLE: <b>LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR</b>	
ADDRESS: <b>1810 EAST ELM STREET</b>			
CITY: <b>JEFFERSON CITY</b>		STATE: <b>MO</b>	ZIP: <b>65101</b>
EMAIL: <b>otto.fajen@mnea.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>In-Person</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 8:50 AM</b>

**THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.**

The Association recognizes that there must be increased development and maintenance of alternative programs to meet the needs of at-risk and/or students with special needs, preK through adult. The Association recommends early access to intervening services and appropriate identification and placement of these students. Teachers, related service providers, and administrators should receive necessary training in diagnostic processes and alternative methods of teaching and learning.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>RODGER CROME</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 12:00 AM</b>
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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>RUSSELL DORN</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>carla3150@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/7/2022 10:34 PM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

My name is Russell Dorn. I am 8 years old and I live in Kansas City. I wanted to come talk to you in person today, but my parents had to go to work and I had to go to school. I use Braille as my second language of sorts because I have a special eye condition called oculocutaneous albinism type 1B (my parents helped me spell that). I am legally blind, and my preschool teachers thought I would need to learn Braille because I need my print blown up so big it is hard to read fast, and my eyes get tired during the day and it gets harder to read print for more than a few minutes in the afternoon. But my school didn't think I needed Braille and so i got a lawyer to help me. When I started learning Braille it was very hard because I only got to learn it 3 hours a week, but I got print reading 90 minutes every day. This bill would help say that kids who are learning Braille need enough teaching so they can read just like other kids.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>SAMUEL RICHARD CUMMINS</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>cummins12087@gmail.com</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/4/2022 11:28 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

I am a special education administrator and father of two children who are blind. My wife is a Teacher of the Visually Impaired for Francis Howell School District. It is out of this professional expertise and personal interest that I want to offer my comments in support of this bill. The disability of blindness and the professional abilities of Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments are something that is so often misunderstood, even by IEP teams of education professionals. There have been MANY times that I have sat in an IEP meeting and heard that braille is "more difficult than reading print" and that my child is "too young" to receive Orientation and Mobility services and other services under the Expanded Core Curriculum. I have been urged by the professionals around my children to count on other methods of reading, such as audio resources, and to "wait until they are older" to have them receive training in areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum, such as travel and recreation. I feel very fortunate to have the personal background and the background of my wife's profession to tell me that both of these were misguided and poor ideas for our children. Had we taken this advice that is all too often given in IEP meetings, we may have had two students who, today, would be functionally illiterate and unable to travel and equitably access other areas of their life (such as those in the Expanded Core Curriculum) in the same way as their peers. My wife and I know countless families who children, despite being typically developing and of typical intellectual ability, are not given adequate braille instruction in the early grades because of the view that "braille is too hard" or because there are not staff who are knowledgeable in braille to teach the student. The view is also common that children with some remaining vision should access print primarily. This is often ok when the child is young and the text on the page is large and there is not a large volume of text, but as soon as a child enters later elementary school and is expected to read longer text more quickly, it can often become a huge problem. Functionally, they don't have the skills to keep up with their peers and they function much as any other illiterate student would, relying on audio and other resources that are harder to access and less efficient to access. This situation compounds the disadvantages blind/visually impaired individuals already arrive to Kindergarten with--Imagine the thousands of hours of incidental experience with letters and literacy that signed individuals have just from their environment that blind/VI individuals cannot see. Never mind the fact that many parents who might normally read to their children and expose them to literacy feel ill equipped because they do not know braille or understand who a young blind child acquires literacy differently than a sighted child. As a result of these systematic inequities and barriers that many blind/visually impaired children face, they need the added legal/procedural protections and definitions that this bill offers to the IEP process. This bill is a step in the right direction of making sure that IEP teams are made to consider braille, Orientation and Mobility, and the other areas of the Expanded Core Curriculum as vital services and are made to be more intentional and evidence-based in not providing them to a student.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>STACI L ENGLAND</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>staciengland@att.net</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/8/2022 11:37 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

Keeping biological males out of biological female sports (and vice versa) no matter which gender they identify with is an important way to keep our female children and teens safe. Schools should lose accreditation if they are so confused about gender and gender capabilities.



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<b>WITNESS NAME</b>			
<b>INDIVIDUAL:</b>			
WITNESS NAME: <b>STEPHANIE SNOW GEBEL</b>		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: <b>stephanie@thesnowfoundation.org</b>	ATTENDANCE: <b>Written</b>		SUBMIT DATE: <b>3/5/2022 9:04 AM</b>
<b>THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.</b>			

**My daughter is visually impaired. These visually impaired individuals need to feel more included in their education. Vision is a hard sense to lose, it makes it very difficult to navigate in the education process. More needs to be done.**