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To: Andrew Perchlik <APerchlik@leg.state.vt.us>; Brian Campion <BCampion@leg.state.vt.us>; Cheryl Hooker <CHooker@leg.state.vt.us>; Daphne Kinney-Landis <dkinneylandis@leg.state.vt.us>; Joshua C. Terenzini <JTerenzini@leg.state.vt.us>; Thomas Chittenden <TChittenden@leg.state.vt.us>; Virginia Lyons <VLyons@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: [External] H.716

[External]

Good Morning Senate Education Committee,

My name is Brittany Lovejoy. I'm a former Special Educator and mother of four children. I'm writing to ask you to please remove the delay in the new special education rules from H. 716, specifically around adverse effect. I've waited a year for adverse effect to be lifted to get my son services. If this gets further delayed, then he would be waiting another year (perhaps creating a five-year reading gap!). The school district said that he was fine because his classroom grades looked good; however, an evaluation from 6th grade showed that he was reading on a 3rd-grade level. He was three years behind; and the school district used the existing adverse effect rule to deny him services. He's now in 7th grade and has continued to go without services. He go through 8th grade without services if you delay this rule. Imagine going into 9th grade at a unremediated 3rd grade reading level? If you approve this delay then you will also be responsible in failing him (and other children with needs that adverse effect harms).

Adverse effect doesn't align with the federal laws, and it limits qualifying students for interventions. Parents don't have the means to fight this state law and I'm relying on your help so that our children do not remain stagnant and delayed. Please help me advocate for my son this year by voting "**NO**" to **delay the House Education Committee's Miscellaneous Education Bill (H.716)**. Why let his literacy gap get larger? Basically by approving this law you would be allowing the school system to fail many children for another year. Waiting will harm children who need help now and they may never be able to get back another year! It's a domino effect on their education. Truly this is not only academically harming children, but it emotionally harms them as well.

As a former special educator, I can tell you that the paperwork process of Adverse Effect takes extra time. You would be saving time in the long run. The changes were passed because it was clear we needed to change this law - why delay something that will continue to harm our children who need help now? **Please remove the second part of H. 716 and allow the Special Education Rule changes to take effect as planned on July 1, 2022.**

If you have questions and would like an oral testimony, please let me know and I will make myself available for you.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brittany Lovejoy M.Ed
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