

IMPORTANT- Adapt this to make it your own.
Personalize the red areas.

Date

The Honorable Judy Biggert
Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mrs. Biggert,

On behalf of the **6,800 members of the International Reading Association's Illinois Reading Council** we ask you to become an original co-sponsor for the house companion bill to S.958, the Striving Readers Act of 2007.

On March 22, 2007 Senators Jeff Sessions and Patty Murray introduced the Striving Readers Act in the Senate. This bill will vastly expand the capacity of schools to help older students who struggle with reading by establishing adolescent literacy initiatives aimed at increasing high school graduation and college readiness.

The legislation will expand and authorize **the** current Striving Readers Program that funds only eight grants. The Striving Readers Act of 2007 will make funding available to every state to implement school wide adolescent literacy programs, support statewide initiatives, and allow data collection and rigorous evaluation to document program success. In addition, this bill will prepare teachers to incorporate literacy strategies in core academic classes and will assist parents by training them to support their children's literacy development.

The **(fill in your state/council's name)** Reading Council represents reading specialists, university professors, literacy coaches, classroom teachers, reading researchers, and librarians. We witness, along with core subject area teachers, the unmet needs of middle and high school students with inadequate reading ability.

(Fill in number or percentage) of 8th graders in our **state/district** read below basic standards according to state assessment tests. This means they can't **(Fill in a short example of insufficient skills).**

Then give a short example from your state or district re how funds could be used if you were awarded a grant. This should be very short. The entire letter should be one page.

We know, based on our experience with improved K-3 reading instruction, that given the right instruction and opportunity every child can learn to read and achieve at his or her highest level. It is time to build on the reading effort that has helped improve the ability of younger readers to also ensure competent adolescent learners. This investment in the future of millions of young Americans is critical to the economic future of our country. Please support the Striving Readers Act of 2007 by signing on as a co-sponsor.

Sincerely,

Your name

Fill in your state's name Reading Council
Address and contact information