EXHIBIT 15
DATE 2-16-15
HB 451

Madam chair and committee members thank you for hearing my testimony.

My son Hayes has Down's syndrome and is considered developmentally delayed. He is currently 7 years old and in kindergarten. This is his second year attending kindergarten. After his first year of kindergarten Hayes was not at a kindergarten level. We felt that these early years of his education were very important as they would be the foundation for all his future learning. This would be true of any child. This year Hayes has worked hard and is close to his peers in his work however he is still delayed in many areas. He may benefit in the future from repeating grades to master his education. Hayes will always be delayed and that is exactly why having more time in school it what he needs. This extra time could come in the form of repeating grades or could come from more transition services after his senior year. Currently if Hayes does not repeat any grades he will turn 19 years old in January of his 12th year of school. As the law stands he cannot repeat any grades from now on if he hopes to graduate from high school his senior year. He will not have any extra time to master skills that are difficult for him or to transition into the community. For the sake of Hayes and other children in his situation adding 2 more years to their education by raising the graduation age to 21 will give them the time they needs to become productive citizens. Please vote yes for house bill 451.

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