

Subject: Favorable SB921

To: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Derrick Day

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My name is Derrick Day. I am in the ninth grade at Westminster High School. My sister Meredith is also blind. She is in the seventh grade at West Middle School. Please vote in favor of SB 921 so that my sister and I, as well as other blind students, will not have so many accessibility issues.

Blind students have the same accessibility issues year after year. I was unable to practice math skills because the school system used an inaccessible program called Khan Academy. My sister currently has the same problem because the school system is still using the inaccessible Khan Academy. We need this bill so that blind students can be successful.

As a ninth-grade student, I am taking geometry, physics, and chemistry. I am expected to use Kami and Equatio, two programs that are not accessible to me as a blind student. I am still expected to do the work and I want to do it. However, I have to overcome additional barriers that my sighted peers do not have because of the lack of accessibility. I have a vision teacher who helps me get access to the curriculum. When programs such as Kami and Equatio are inaccessible, the vision teacher cannot get my work to me at the same time as my peers receive their work because she has to scan the text out of the document and use a computer program to transcribe it into Braille. I am always playing catchup. If these programs were accessible, I could read them at the same time as my sighted peers.

I want to get a job in the computer science field. I was very excited that my school allows freshmen to take introductory computer courses. Unfortunately, I was denied the opportunity to study computer science this semester. I could not write programs because the class was required to use an inaccessible code on the website, code.org. I should have been able to participate in this course. Vendors should not sell local school systems inaccessible programs and local school systems should not purchase them.

Please vote in favor of SB 921. I need a good education so that I can get a job and become a taxpayer.