

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to give testimony AGAINST S.B. 374

Please do not compel homeschooled children to submit to mental health evaluations against the consent of their parents.

First it is an entirely unnecessary and wasteful use of resources. Homeschooling parents, by the intense nature of their responsibilities and by virtue of the close family bonds which unite them to their children, know their children intimately and are automatically put in a position of superior knowledge as compared to a mental health professional. It is safe to conclude that such a professional will not uncover anything in such an evaluation that was not previously known to the parent.

Second, it will not accomplish the stated end purpose for which it is ostensibly being created. Any motivated adolescent that age can easily "game the system" and evade a particular diagnosis by providing safe, dishonest answers. It is silly to assume that truthful answers to intimate questions will be given in such a contrived circumstance, in which a perfect stranger is asking detailed questions of a student who is there against his or her wishes. Again, no one knows a child better than his or her parent.

Third, and most importantly, it would radically delete the natural rights of parents to protect the privacy of themselves, their family, and their children. To submit to a mental health evaluation is to allow a stranger to ask penetrating questions that go right to the very heart of a person. It is akin to reading a student's diary. In fact, if the promotion of the public safety is what this bill is after, a reading of diaries would likely turn up the very information that the State is looking for, and with far less guesswork than a mental health evaluation. But in both the cases of forced mental health assessments and forced reading of diaries, it is silly to suggest that the State has the right to do either. Both are violations of the constitutional right for citizens to be "secure in their persons, papers, and effects" and the innate Constitutional right to privacy that has been upheld within the Fourteenth Amendment via the Supreme Court's ruling in *Griswold vs Connecticut*.

Fourthly, as a high income earner who is a mobile entrepreneur, I am free to move my tax dollars and homeschooling plans elsewhere, and if Connecticut were to mistakenly pass SB 374 I would be all too happy to vote with my feet and deprive the Nutmeg State of the residency of my family, model citizens that they are, and approximately \$60,000 in state tax revenues-- a number that is likely to rise over time.

Sincerely yours,
Geoffrey Gentile
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