

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to express my strong opposition to SB374, a bill requiring behavioral health assessments for children in public school grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 and homeschooled children ages 12, 14 and 17.

As a citizen of CT, I believe blanket mandatory behavioral assessments of children violate our children's privacy and the privacy of our families, and are not the most effective way to ensure children requiring services are able to attain them. I understand and share the concern that children requiring mental health treatment should be able to receive it, but I believe parents are ultimately the ones who should make this decision.

As a homeschooling parent in CT, I do not believe that the State Department of Education should have access to any information relating to my children, except for the enumeration requirement put forth in CT General Statute 10-249. This would be as odd a notion to me and my family as it would be to suggest that a private school should be charged with collecting information about our family. We do not educate our children within the public school system, therefore the public school system does not need to be involved in keeping records on our children.

Instead of passing this bill, we would be better served to make mental-health services more widely available, not to mention affordable, to those who seek them out. We should support families going through domestic abuse and other dysfunctional situations, which contribute greatly to the mental health of our children. We should do those things which are indeed hard, but which are much more likely to really solve the problem. This bill will not.

Sincerely,

Laurel

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