

Dear Honorable Members of the Connecticut Education Committee,

We are a homeschooling family, recently moved to Scotland, CT from Norwich, CT. My husband, Shane Belliveau, and I strongly oppose sections 17 and 18 of SB 874. This bill is a massive departure from current CT homeschooling laws. We believe it is an unnecessary and harmful infringement on our family privacy and educational autonomy.

There is no evidence to support the idea that compulsory registration with public school systems will improve the education that homeschooling families provide their children. It is, however, blatant discrimination to require one segment of the population to register with the public schools, while other, wealthier segments of the population that choose educational alternatives to public schooling (e.g., private schools, religious schools, etc.) are not required to register. Giving out our personal, family information to DCF as part of this registration process is a further infringement of privacy, and implies a distrust and an attempt to demonize a segment of the state's population, just because they choose an educational alternative to a standard public education.

Parents who choose the path of home education do not do so out of negligence; they do so out of a deep commitment to the optimal education of their children. Homeschooling parents are highly responsible for quality and depth of their children's education. And, their diligence is reflected in the consistently high scores that homeschooled children receive when given standardized tests, which across the board are typically 15-30% higher than their public schooled counterparts. We are not suggesting that homeschooling is always the better or superior option as compared to public schools, but rather pointing out that homeschooling has consistently proved itself- by virtue of test scores, college admittance, and the successful careers of graduated homeschoolers— to be a viable educational option that does not require government interference nor deserve the outright prejudiced, punishing treatment that is being called for in SB 874.

We pay high taxes every year to support our public school system, yet our towns have never had to pay a cent to support the education of our children. We have not been allowed to participate in the activities or utilize the resources of our local public school, despite having faithfully paid our taxes every year. It is an insult to injury to require us to register with the public school system, and then hand all our personal information over to DCF as if we were enacting a harmful or questionable activity upon our children. In an age where schools are overflowing, their financial resources are inadequate and schools are struggling to serve the students they have, it is outrageous to further punish those citizens who are lightening the burden that public schools are bearing.

It is outright discrimination to require all homeschoolers to register with the public school system. Further, it is completely unnecessary and in no way will improve the education of homeschooled students.

We respectfully request that stop SB 874 definitively and entirely.

Sincerely,

Anne Belliveau, B.A., L.M.T.

Shane Belliveau, Master Carpenter

