

February 28, 2019

Dear legislators and education committee members:

I wish to submit my written testimony in regards to the language of Sections 17 and 18 of SB 874. I respectfully submit my opposition to the language as written in the proposed bill.

Specifically, page 20-21, lines 623-627, "The parent or person having control of a child who provides home instruction to such child shall personally appear annually at the school district office and sign a registration form indicating that such child will be receiving home instruction," goes against the principals in which Connecticut was founded on. Parents not only have the right to instruct their children, but have the responsibility for obtaining such instruction. Public school, including registration with, does not support that foundation or necessity of providing instruction at home. I choose to homeschool without bias, restriction, and oversight from the government as it is not only my right to instruct my children, but my responsibility. Registration with the state does not contribute nor support the current legislation on education in Connecticut and will only "open another can of worms" to force government control on something that is not in their realm of responsibility unless I choose so as a parent.

Additionally, in reference to pages 21-22, lines 652-653, it is ridiculous to combine individual schools that have achievement gaps with parents who are registered to provide home school instruction. This assumes that homeschooling parents are not qualified to instruct their children and that their children are categorized with achievement gaps simply because they are not enrolled in main stream public schools. We homeschool for personal reasons, with it being the flexibility to teach which curriculum we see fits our children's learning styles the best, without government telling us what we have to teach or not teach. One example is our religious beliefs. We have a constitutional right to freedom of religion and choose to implement a curriculum that is based on Christian values, which also happens to teach the basic instruction including language arts, history, science, mathematics, etc.

As one of the original colonies, in 1639, Connecticut put the ideas of Thomas Hooker into practice under the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, which established the foundation of our state's government. Thomas Hooker's ideas suggested that the people should control the government (elected officials) rather than the government ruling the people. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut would provide a basis and pattern for the Constitution of the United States (The History of our United States, 54).

The oversight and control that this sneaky language in SB 874 is just a way to have control over what is taught and how material is taught to all students even though current laws state it is the PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY to provide instruction to their children. Please listen. Please stop trying to take away our fundamental rights and gain control. We enjoy living in Connecticut for the freedom of homeschooling and the little oversight that is currently required. I appreciate your time in reading my testimony and would appreciate your support in NOT voting this language through.

Sincerely,

Michelle Brennan