

My husband and I moved to Connecticut almost three years ago. We moved here as my husband is in the Navy, and, at the time, we had military orders, so we had to. But to our surprise, we fell in love with the Northeast. We liked the people, the community, and the variety of things the area offered us.

We moved to Montville, CT, bought a home, and settled down to homeschool our three children.

One of our favorite things about Connecticut is the homeschool support and laws. Unlike previous states we have lived in, the laws here made sense. They adhered to the Constitution, prizing educational choice and freedom, and allowing parents to make the best decisions for their own children.

And this is why, in large part, we had decided to stay in Connecticut when my husband retires from the military in a year. The common-sense approach to homeschooling, as well as the rich and lively community we have experienced here, make us want to raise our family here.

We have grown so serious about this that, up until last week, we had minimized contact with headhunters discussing job offers in other states. We felt so comfortable with the job offers in CT that we had begun the first tentative steps to move my parents up here with us.

Then, when I read Sections 17 and 18 in S.B. 874. I was astounded. Requiring homeschoolers to register, in person, at the school districts' offices is a huge departure from the freedoms and benefits allowed and supported by previous state law, which deeply upheld a parent's Constitutional right to educate their children as they see best.

The proposed law's obtuse wording left me confused and frustrated. I honestly felt like I was being discriminated against because of my family's method of education. It almost reads like a tract from government regimes of the past, requiring persons of certain religions or ethnicities to show up and "register" themselves and their families.

And why? The law doesn't explain what the districts' offices will be doing with that information. Why do they need it? Where they will store it? If I were to show up and register with the district, what information are they requiring from me? Who has access to this list of homeschoolers they are accumulating? How does this benefit my children? Or any children, for that matter? How does this benefit my community? The law answers none of these questions.

It puzzles me why a state with financial crises and a current focus on fiscal responsibility would want to spend money on discriminating against homeschoolers. Because it will cost money to build and design a database and storage system for the information. It will cost money to staff school districts with

someone to keep track of the system and deal with the homeschooling families. It will cost money to inform and enforce a law in a population that doesn't want the law or need the law.

I happily and willingly pay my property taxes and support my town's school systems. I understand the vast majority of my peer parents will choose public schools for their children, and I support that choice. And I want the schools to use the funds they are given to best educate those families who are CHOOSING public schools.

But my family is not choosing public schools. Also, we are not asking for resources or support or anything of our school district. The school district doesn't need me to register with them, as I am not choosing to have them facilitate my children's education.

I want that money to go toward the safety and education of the children in public school, who deserve it. They chose public schools, and they deserve the best it can give them. My family does not need taxpayer dollars wasted on registering us, nor do we need curriculum that we do not choose and do not want.

In the end, all Sections 17 and 18 do in S.B. 874 is rob homeschooling families of their legal rights to educate their children as they see fit, as well as discriminate against them as a class of people for completely arbitrary reasons.

I oppose Sec. 17 and 18 of SB 874 because it is wasteful, unnecessary, and discriminatory.

Why should legislators vote to implement a new mandate for which there has been no explanation given? Why should legislators follow blindly, when they are meant to be acting in favor of what's best for their constituents?

Legislators, your constituents are speaking, and we are telling you that we do not want this. Homeschooling families do not need this.

Please join me and your other constituents and oppose Sec. 17 and 18 of S.B. 874.

Brittany Casey