

Governor's Bill No.874 - An Act Concerning Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut.

My name is Shannon Chaiklin. Growing up, I attended public school through second grade and was then educated at home through high school. I then went on to attend a small, private, college where I earned both my Bachelors and Masters degrees. Now, as a parent, I have begun educating my five-year-old at home and intend to do the same with my other children. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Governor's Bill No. 874, particularly Section 17 (pages 20-21), making changes to Section 10-184, and Section 18 (pages 21-22), making changes to Section 10-1600.

These proposed changes are both unconstitutional and discriminatory in nature. These changes are a backhanded way to force families who educate at home to register with DCF. This is made clear by an email reply from Representative Liz Linehan in which she states that "By registering, if DCF crosschecks families with neglect investigations, they can better serve these kids who actually are being neglected and abused." If there is reason to suspect neglect, DCF can, and should, investigate in those specific situations. That being said, there is no reason to require a particular group of people to register. This is simply an opportunity for responsible, loving, families to give DCF information, that is not needed, for no reasonable reason.

This bill singles out parents who educate their children at home. Parents who send their children to a religious school, private school, charter school, or even PUBLIC SCHOOL are not required to register in person. This requirement opens the door for bias and discrimination.

As someone who was primarily educated at home until I attended college and now as a parent, I can attest that choosing to educate your children at home is in no way neglectful. On the contrary, it takes more time, effort, and attention than sending your kids to school every day. Making the decision to educate your children at home is one fueled by love and dedication. A family's decision to instruct their children at home is made for a variety of reasons and families shouldn't be made to feel like criminals or investigated for neglect simply for deciding to educate their children at home.

In my experience both as a parent educator and as a child educated at home, I have found an abundance of educational resources and social groups that can be incorporated into our learning routines. My child does not, and will not, lack various forms of social interactions. As a parent educator, I have been able to instruct my child in ways that suit their learning style. They are able to study things that interest them in ways they understand and fuel their thirst for knowledge. Home educating families do not need any curriculum forced upon us. When allowed to learn their own way and pursue areas of study that excite them, children flourish and learning becomes a passion instead of an obligation. That is part of the beauty and uniqueness of home education.

I ask that you vote NO regarding SB. 874, particularly sections 17 and 18.

Thank you for your time,
Shannon Chaiklin
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