

SB 874

I Oppose Sec. 17 and Sec. 18 of SB 874

As a homeschool mother of four, I would like to speak against the new bill you would like to pass which would infringe on our right to educate and parent our children in the way of our choice that is best for each child individually. No one cares for our children more than we as parents do. If we have never been shown to be irresponsible parents in the past, there is no reason to assume that we are not seeking the best for our own children. We have taught our children since the very moment they entered this world, and know more about their talents, interests, learning style, abilities and personality than any teacher could even learn about them in 1-6 hours a day over a 9 month span. We have more reason to develop EACH OF OUR OWN CHILDREN into healthy, intelligent, wise, kind, helpful, giving, independent members of society than any teacher could for any individual child he/she encounters each day.

There is no need for this and no reason given as to why they would need this. We do not need or want the government's infringement on our parental rights to take care of our children and educate them appropriately. We chose to leave the public school system for several reasons and have the right to choose to educate our children the way we think is best for them without the government or school regulating that. The same school system that we did not think was appropriately teaching our children, and had caused damage to their education, should not have the authority to, in any way, regulate the way we choose to educate our kids. We had to work very hard to right some of these wrongs and help the children catch up where the school left off. As parents we believe that we are God-ordained and solely responsible for the education of our children. And, quite frankly, it is not humanly possible for any one teacher to care more about or invest as much energy or time into the future or education of any one of the hundreds of children they get the privilege of teaching each year, but we as parents can and do.

We began homeschooling about 8 years ago and had my oldest son home for 3 years. I regretfully sent him back for a few years and much of the progress I had made with him at home was lost. We took all 4 kids out at different times over the past 4 years and have never regretted this decision to speak into their lives, to give them more opportunity to create bonds with each other, to learn about the things that are interesting to them that they are skilled in, and to help them "catch up" in areas where the school had left them in the dust. We have taken an active interest in making sure the curriculum we choose is presented in a way that my children can excel in their learning and is useful to their future career interests.

Before we even had them all at home, I had several friends that chose to homeschool and always found that these families were teaching their children extremely high values, self-motivation, ability to socialize and work beside many people at various ages (they can carry on conversations with adults and younger/older children much better than any kids that come out of a public or private school setting, who tend to be around only kids the same age for the most part until the day they graduate), they excel in the knowledge in the areas they are interested in, because they can be taught individually and by a method that works best for their learning style and given more time to focus on those interests.

Many colleges prefer homeschooled graduates because they know they are generally hard workers, independent and self-motivated. My oldest has been accepted to and is doing very well in a well-known university and he did much better learning at home than the years he attended public school. He went to public school in elementary school and again 3 years of high school, all the while he struggled to keep

his grades up, felt defeated and so lacked motivation even to try. Teachers would just help him pass so he could move forward with the rest of the class, when he did not grasp yet what they were teaching. We found later that although he is very bright, he is a kinesthetic learner, and since the majority of students do not learn this way, classes are not taught for kinesthetic learners. We took him out senior year to catch him up in math and language arts to meet the minimum requirements for the college he wanted to attend, we then successfully graduated him. He has been accepted in and is doing very well at his chosen school. Now that we better know how he learns, he can continue his learning in environment that works well for him and is pursuing psychology to help at risk teens. **I'm not sure if he would have chosen college at all if he hadn't had the opportunity to homeschool in the method that worked best for him.** And, as his parents, we were best able to discover what that was and provide that opportunity to him. Parents have the right to educate their children in the way they feel is appropriate and best for the child; the majority of homeschooling parents do seek the best for their children. No parent should be penalized for the minority of those who do not seek the best for their children. It has been my experience in the homeschool community for many years that these parents TRULY take part in the care and education of their kids in every way, including socially, relationally, teaching life skills and the book learning they need to pursue higher education and a career of their choice.

I have yet to come across one homeschool parent that does not have his/her child's best future in mind! However, since I also have experience with the public school setting I will attest to many of those parents not taking very much of an active interest in any of these areas, for a few of them even school is free babysitting and they count down the days until they no longer need to support these kids. NO homeschool parent would logically take on this enormous responsibility and have that mindset. Why would we be penalized with no good reason, or reasons that are not being disclosed to us, that have nothing to do with our families at all.

Each of my children are different, they have different interests, ideas, learning style, times of day and even locations in which they do their best work, and we can accommodate all that and instead of producing a cookie cutter replica of 200 other students from the same class, we can produce a unique, hard working, wise member of society. We are able to hone in on their skill set and begin dual enrollment into college or technical school in high school and even give them more time to develop work experience to give them a head start and minimize or eliminate entirely the need for student debt!

Our youngest and middle son struggled with reading while attending public school, they are also kinesthetic learners and could not get enough help in the school system to keep up in classes, and absolutely hated being called on or reading in groups, it was really traumatic for them. Their confidence was nearly shattered, and they hated school. Since they have been homeschooled, they have both improved drastically in reading, spelling, writing, comprehension, math skills, skipping multiple grade levels in each area because we could use the types of teaching that works best for them and were able to offer individual attention, focusing on the areas in which they needed the most help! Both love learning about science, technology, history and how things work, most of their reading and writing can be done on subjects they enjoy, and we can still meet pre-requisites for the degree and college of their choice for language arts. The older goes into 11<sup>th</sup> grade next year and can begin training for his desired career, working toward his degree as well as participate in work experience if he chooses to, while completing his diploma. The younger in third grade has increased in his confidence exponentially and instead of trying to avoid reading, believing he could not, he has taken an active love of books and has quite the collection he reads daily. This never would have happened in public school due to the lack of manpower and lack of ability to care solely for my child. I know this is true because we took his older brothers out much further into public school and this WAS their story.

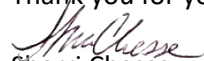
My 16-year-old daughter, quite the opposite of the boys (even her twin brother!) excels in writing and all things Language Arts. She would like to be a writer and/or English teacher, while she homeschools her own children in the future. We still accomplish learning the lesser interesting subjects to her, but we do so in a learning style that she most enjoys, and we only focus on the minimum required prerequisites to enter the degree program at her desired college, leaving room for extra focus on what she truly enjoys, and moving forward into dual enrollment to get a head start on her degree. She can focus more of her effort in life skills, literature and writing skills that will be useful to her degree and career. We know that God has given her talents and interests that she will use for her God-given purpose and that might not include a lot of history, science or math. We will make sure she has all the minimum requirements for her college degree choice but will focus on things that she will use in life that she enjoys and will likely fit into her chosen profession. She will be working toward an English or education degree during high school taking part in dual enrollment.

There is truly no point teaching advanced math to someone who will write books, or advanced literature to someone who will be an engineer. We focus on teaching math they would use in their chosen profession type (just like every college does in their degree completion plans) as well as personal finance which everyone needs to know. We check the degree prerequisite requirements with the school and degree of their choice to ensure they have what they need to fulfill these requirements, but if that is not their subject of interest, we do not need to go further than that, and can then focus efforts on things they ARE skilled and interested in. For this reason, our children will be better prepared **uniquely** for their continued education and profession than a typical student taught the same way, the same things, as his 199 fellow students in any given class within the public school. In my experience, when a child is falling behind, teachers just help them pass through and keep them moving to stay in line with the other students, the overall goal is staying on task to complete the curriculum on a timeline, even when students do not fully grasp the material, they simply do not have the manpower to go over the material with them again until they get it! This does nothing but destroy their confidence and motivation and does not increase their skill. We allow our kids to go over the same material until they get it! They don't have to keep up with 199 other students in their class while at the same time being held back from excelling beyond in the areas of their strengths! **They get to put more time and effort into the things they were created to do!**

We also have more time to teach them how to handle money, repair things, cook, clean, take care of younger children which is what they will need in real life. We also have more time to build relationships, volunteer in the community, learning how and to want to help others, focus on character development, keep them from bullying, while teaching them how to be mature, responsible citizens of society.

Homeschooling should not be regulated and forced to align with any kind of core curriculum, as that would stifle the natural abilities God has given to each child individually taking precious time away from what they really need to focus on, it is within our rights as parents to teach our children the way we think is best for them, this is not to be mandated by the government. Our students are under the care of parents that love them and have their best interest at heart more than any school/government official or teacher could.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

  
Sherri Chasse