

SB-874

Sophia and Diane Connors

Oppose

Greetings, Chairs & Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Sophia Connors. I'm here today to speak on behalf of myself and my mother, who's on a trip. I've always been homeschooled and I've recently started college. My mother is the founder and president of CT Homeschool Network, CT's largest homeschool organization.

We are both opposed to S.B. 874. We are particularly opposed to Sections 17, 18 & 19, which are the homeschool portions of the bill.

Throughout my childhood I have observed the homeschool parents repeatedly fighting to protect their freedom. The point is, they ARE free to choose how to raise their children. So, why are they always having to protect against it? Why are there always a few people who want to control the parents who homeschool their kids? I ask this committee not to support this overreach or what could be the start of legislative creep, as it is completely unwarranted. The truth is that, homeschoolers do not need oversight. It's the failing public schools and the broken government agencies that need oversight to fix their problems. Since they can't do that, and have far worse problems than any homeschool community ever had, they certainly should not be given any authority with regard to homeschoolers.

Even with the voluntary decision homeschool families make to file a Notice of Intent or not, it has proven to be risky business. Some districts will give homeschoolers a hard time, or even report them to DCF when they have done nothing wrong and are within their legal rights. Homeschool advocates have had to help good families to deal with that abuse of authority for years.

Included with this testimony are three documents.

The first shows the current data of Categories 1 through 5 for public schools, and nearly half of them are average to failing.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> document shows the shocking number of incidents involving sexual abuse and assaults, bullying, and suicides happening in the CT public schools. Unfortunately, these incidents are perpetrated upon children by the adults, not just other children. There are a significant number of homeschoolers who have left the school system because it was not working for their children. Too many times, special needs children are not having their needs met, PPT's and IEP's have failed, so parents find another way to get their children's needs met. It works. There are plenty of resources available and families find success. Why would the Governor think it's a good idea to have homeschoolers "register" with the same system that they needed to leave?

The 3<sup>rd</sup> document explains the nearly unlimited amount of academic resources available, many for free, to homeschool families to instruct their children with. If the Dept. of Ed wants to publish their chosen “model curriculum and standards”, they are, of course, free to do that. However, the homeschool community does not need or necessarily want the limitation those standards and curriculum put upon us, since our resource options are much more expansive and offer more flexibility to meet the specific needs of our children.

I’ve been at the LOB periodically, since I was a year old. I just turned 18. I care about this community, and I know that it needs, yet again, for a legislative committee to uphold the rights of parents to direct the education of their children completely without governmental oversight. The best show of support that you can give to all of us children is to support our parents’ freedom to do their job. Leave homeschoolers alone. We don’t need to be fixed. We don’t need oversight. Those responsible for the inclusion of “homeschooling” in the Governor’s Omnibus bill need to ***leave homeschoolers alone and to take care of the real problems that they have yet to fix.***

CT General Statute 10-184 Duties of Parents, should be a model used nationwide. Other states that have had heavy regulations have decreased regulations over the past five years. CT can stand firm, uphold freedom, and show other states that they can, too. I trust you to uphold our freedom and to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time.

***Did You Know? 2017 CT Government Statistics***  
***Almost half of all the public schools in the CT are at or below average.***

Of that number, **118 schools or districts are failing the students.** The worst are listed below as category 4 & 5. The data also shows the areas listed as specific subject area failures. 1007 schools listed in all CT towns. Out of that list, there are:

\*526 Category 1 & 2 school districts - the cream of the crop. That is 52% of CT public schools.

\*363 Category 3 public schools are the average performing schools which comprise 36% of CT public schools.

\*118 Category 4 & 5 school districts include schools that are performing at the lowest levels either in specific areas or overall. They comprise 12%.

***In other words, between failing schools and those that are just getting by (average), that comprises 48% of CT schools.*** Homeschoolers surely do far better than that. Why would a homeschool family want to be required to “register” with a system that generally does worse than they do? There is zero reason for that to occur. CT homeschool families have over 30 years of success raising and instructing our children, most of whom go on to colleges & universities around the world.

**Category 4 & 5 failing schools and districts:**

Bridgeport School District (multiple schools)  
Brookfield School District, Brookfield High School  
Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts High School – FOCUS MATH  
Clinton School District, The Morgan School FOCUS MATH  
Ct Tech Ed and Career System, Eli Whitney Tech High School 4 FOCUS MATH  
Connecticut Technical Education and Career System  
Emmett O'Brien Technical High School 4 FOCUS ELA  
Danbury School District (multiple schools) Alt. Center For Excellence 4 Turnaround  
Derby School District, Derby High School 4 FOCUS MATH  
East Hartford School District (multiple schools)  
Great Oaks Charter School District Great Oaks Charter School 4 Turnaround  
Hamden School District Hamden Middle School 4 FOCUS MATH  
Hartford School District (multiple schools)  
Asian Studies Academy at Bellizzi School PK 8 4 Turnaround  
Manchester School District Washington School K 5 4 FOCUS MATH  
Meriden School District (multiple schools) Orville H. Platt High School 4 FOCUS MATH  
Waterbury School District (multiple schools) John F. Kennedy High School 4 FOCUS MATH  
Watertown School District Watertown High School 4 FOCUS MATH

West Haven School District West Haven High School 4 FOCUS MATH  
Wethersfield School District Wethersfield High School 4 FOCUS ELA  
Windham School District Windham Middle School 4 FOCUS ELA  
Windsor School District Windsor High School 4 FOCUS MATH  
Bridgeport School District Barnum School 5 FOCUS ELA  
East Hartford School District Silver Lane School FOCUS SCIENCE  
Explorations District Explorations 5 Turnaround  
Hartford School District (multiple schools) Burns Latino Studies Academy 5  
Turnaround  
Meriden School District (multiple schools) John Barry School 5 Turnaround  
New Britain School District (multiple schools) Frank J. DiLoreto School 5 FOCUS ELA  
New Haven School District (multiple schools) A. Lewis Troup School 5 Turnaround  
New London School District Jennings School 5 FOCUS SCIENCE  
Norwich School District Veterans' Memorial School 5 Turnaround  
Stamford Academy District Stamford Academy 5 Turnaround  
Trailblazers Academy District Trailblazers Academy 5 Turnaround  
Waterbury School District (multiple schools) Bucks Hill School 5 FOCUS MATH  
Windham School District

Taken from Ed

Sight: <http://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/School%20Categories%202016-17.pdf>

*Contact info:*

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***National Home Education Legal Defense (NHELD)***

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*February 2019*

***Did You Know?  
How many public school children have been assaulted, sexually abused or otherwise harmed during their school day, especially by staff?***

**Did you know there is a full-time CT law firm that specializes in lawsuits of such victims?  
Were You a Victim of Sexual Abuse at School?**

“Tragically, however, there are a few educators who violate this trust and have sexually assaulted children. When that occurs, not only must the teacher be held responsible but also the school needs to be held responsible if it allowed the abuse to occur. At Tremont Sheldon Robinson Mahoney P.C. in Bridgeport, we have settled a number of cases against private, parochial and public schools and are actively pursuing a case against a public high school. Sexual abuse in schools is far more prevalent than people realize. If you have been abused, you are not alone and help is available. Call our office at 203-212-9075 to schedule a confidential consultation to discuss what happened.”

<https://www.tremontsheldon.com/Sexual-Abuse/Sexual-Abuse-at-School/>

**Suffield Superintendent among 2 arrested for non-reporting of abuse**

[https://patch.com/connecticut/suffield/suffield-superintendent-among-2-arrested-non-reporting-abuse?fbclid=IwAR2akfo8f4FGFQZND7aCc9j3c7ork9KdjPUpFtwLR5\\_n2ZmdfritUEcMoKhv](https://patch.com/connecticut/suffield/suffield-superintendent-among-2-arrested-non-reporting-abuse?fbclid=IwAR2akfo8f4FGFQZND7aCc9j3c7ork9KdjPUpFtwLR5_n2ZmdfritUEcMoKhv)  
Bullied teenage girl, 16, jumps to death from mall [https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6692509/Bullied-teenage-girl-16-jumps-death-mall-parking-garage-roof.html?fbclid=IwARoGeT3WHGumVgQBOQ\\_oXSbevhOGYK81alZPPWjNvx-05KiMJNjp-5eqTrI](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6692509/Bullied-teenage-girl-16-jumps-death-mall-parking-garage-roof.html?fbclid=IwARoGeT3WHGumVgQBOQ_oXSbevhOGYK81alZPPWjNvx-05KiMJNjp-5eqTrI)

**Teachers sexual misconduct confirmed: Cheshire Academy Officials**

[https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6692509/Bullied-teenage-girl-16-jumps-death-mall-parking-garage-roof.html?fbclid=IwARoGeT3WHGumVgQBOQ\\_oXSbevhOGYK81alZPPWjNvx-05KiMJNjp-5eqTrI](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6692509/Bullied-teenage-girl-16-jumps-death-mall-parking-garage-roof.html?fbclid=IwARoGeT3WHGumVgQBOQ_oXSbevhOGYK81alZPPWjNvx-05KiMJNjp-5eqTrI)

**Teacher cleared, 3 others remain on leave at Barnard magnet**

[wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-haven/teacher-cleared-3-others-remain-on-leave-at-barnard-magnet-school/1782814517?fbclid=IwAR3e9SqrGqxb\\_qAVMwIgha8FFouMN4mW8SYRe5SGrc3ItROS9qE-42SWYKM](http://wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-haven/teacher-cleared-3-others-remain-on-leave-at-barnard-magnet-school/1782814517?fbclid=IwAR3e9SqrGqxb_qAVMwIgha8FFouMN4mW8SYRe5SGrc3ItROS9qE-42SWYKM)

**Former RHAM teacher convicted of enticing minor by computer pleads no contest**

<https://www.courant.com/news/connecticut/hc-east-windsor-bryan-moore-rape-0109-20190109-rzkzte3r5jfz7hhlbhvohibmo4-story.html?fbclid=IwAR39u7KF023CulBMU96v6R9Sf5F5NN5Np-mpzAE7NQEOwMeV.JbPEBx8SWIE>

**Reported voyeurism at Ct college**

[https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20190206/reported-voyeurism-under-investigation-at-conn-college?fbclid=IwAR05tt1wlGk5nvMJ\\_GPXLyGS9W-heXKcJkz2qV8NQ8zKpC3WI9rdkaNN1yw](https://www.theday.com/policefirecourts/20190206/reported-voyeurism-under-investigation-at-conn-college?fbclid=IwAR05tt1wlGk5nvMJ_GPXLyGS9W-heXKcJkz2qV8NQ8zKpC3WI9rdkaNN1yw)

**Ex teacher caught with alleged student lover**

<https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Ex-teacher-caught-with-alleged-student-lover-13044863.php>

**NHPS records show 17 teachers and staff on paid leave accused of misconduct**

[https://www.wtnh.com/news/news-8-exclusive/nhps-records-show-17-teachers-and-staff-on-paid-leave-accused-of-misconduct/1687037145?fbclid=IwAR2mscoxBYw4mOG4GxDrhmLilueQ\\_CH4P-Ox9Ry04Pq0s59vFh4R8LjS-kY](https://www.wtnh.com/news/news-8-exclusive/nhps-records-show-17-teachers-and-staff-on-paid-leave-accused-of-misconduct/1687037145?fbclid=IwAR2mscoxBYw4mOG4GxDrhmLilueQ_CH4P-Ox9Ry04Pq0s59vFh4R8LjS-kY)

**Fire Montville school lunch monitor accused of pushing 4th grader**

[theday.com/policefirecourts/20190205/fired-montville-school-lunch-monitor-accused-of-pushing-fourth-grader?fbclid=IwAR2fcUt7yalaeBckddlzFmKgyBJDVbOH1Wr2lmUV5I7Kdpxpc1SDTO4s5BQ](http://theday.com/policefirecourts/20190205/fired-montville-school-lunch-monitor-accused-of-pushing-fourth-grader?fbclid=IwAR2fcUt7yalaeBckddlzFmKgyBJDVbOH1Wr2lmUV5I7Kdpxpc1SDTO4s5BQ)

**Former Bridgeport teacher sentenced 5 years for sexually assaulting 2 students**

<https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/fairfield/former-bridgeport-teacher-sentenced-5-years-for-sexually-assaulting-2-students/1727324160>

**Child Advocate: Montville Schools' Failure To Report 'Fight Club' Activity 'Egregious'**

<https://www.courant.com/breaking-news/hc-br-montville-high-school-fight-club-arrest-20180412-story.html>

**Professor Required Students to Praise Allah, Remove Shoes Before Entering Office**

[http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/06/18/professor-required-students-to-praise-allah-remove-shoes-before-entering-office.html?fbclid=IwAR16L1PaYZc787lh8617MFRVQQ\\_8y5gitgWXDjbmVUqvBJitRHKKL09UWIE](http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/06/18/professor-required-students-to-praise-allah-remove-shoes-before-entering-office.html?fbclid=IwAR16L1PaYZc787lh8617MFRVQQ_8y5gitgWXDjbmVUqvBJitRHKKL09UWIE)

**At Hotchkiss School, Sexual Misconduct and 'Missed Opportunities' to Stop it**

[https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/nyregion/hotchkiss-school-sexual-misconduct.html?fbclid=IwAR3P-i6ATQEFayJDUG3KHU\\_BIjkIZb219vLoCSLDvBCKv-4I8eVMavWN3pQ](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/nyregion/hotchkiss-school-sexual-misconduct.html?fbclid=IwAR3P-i6ATQEFayJDUG3KHU_BIjkIZb219vLoCSLDvBCKv-4I8eVMavWN3pQ)

**Former Westfield Schools Maintenance Worker Charged After Trying to Meet Teenage Boy**

[https://www.google.com/amp/s/articles.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/one-time\\_westfield\\_schools\\_mai.amp?fbclid=IwARoR3C6PQPnQfbXJUAvkfQutbTNYjr5WLE79vJUX8BHO7mbXeSXvgwFGyig](https://www.google.com/amp/s/articles.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/one-time_westfield_schools_mai.amp?fbclid=IwARoR3C6PQPnQfbXJUAvkfQutbTNYjr5WLE79vJUX8BHO7mbXeSXvgwFGyig)

**Police Look into Alleged Sex Assaults at Connecticut School**

[https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/connecticut/articles/2018-08-27/police-look-into-alleged-sex-assaults-at-connecticut-school?fbclid=IwAR3BGoopZ-vloQJzkXJR\\_iovJ8nPqeSE5O-W44rpeOuStMJVSL727lhkcoQ](https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/connecticut/articles/2018-08-27/police-look-into-alleged-sex-assaults-at-connecticut-school?fbclid=IwAR3BGoopZ-vloQJzkXJR_iovJ8nPqeSE5O-W44rpeOuStMJVSL727lhkcoQ)

**Waterford Teacher Accused of Sexually Assaulting a Minor, Providing Alcohol**

<https://fox61.com/2018/10/15/waterford-teacher-accused-of-sexual-assaulting-a-minor-providing-alcohol/?fbclid=IwAR2OjtIWHdV5nFojUykMdiXppPJExCosMOfmWpx3taBDZ16reWV-KS57I>

**Bridgeport Teacher Charged with Sexual Assault in More Trouble**

[http://fox61.com/2018/07/03/bridgport-teacher-charged-with-sexual-assault-in-more-trouble/?utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem%3A+Trending+Content&utm\\_content=5b3c012404d30105d6201edo&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3pL\\_lvtZRmV913Ql4Qo6L1wLGNyN94-ylGqxCcmoVLdMRCqnS8I6VT\\_9Y](http://fox61.com/2018/07/03/bridgport-teacher-charged-with-sexual-assault-in-more-trouble/?utm_campaign=trueAnthem%3A+Trending+Content&utm_content=5b3c012404d30105d6201edo&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=facebook&fbclid=IwAR3pL_lvtZRmV913Ql4Qo6L1wLGNyN94-ylGqxCcmoVLdMRCqnS8I6VT_9Y)

**School Board Slams Bullying Report**

[https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/School-board-slams-bullying-report-13027806.php?fbclid=IwARo\\_31VNxYGO20DZP17-liltwP72Ve-NAwSI5-SQaLi7DcUoZmIQhe8NrQE](https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/School-board-slams-bullying-report-13027806.php?fbclid=IwARo_31VNxYGO20DZP17-liltwP72Ve-NAwSI5-SQaLi7DcUoZmIQhe8NrQE)

**Ridgefield's Scotland Elementary School Principle Under Fire**

<https://patch.com/connecticut/ridgefield/ridgefields-scotland-elementary-school-principal-under-fire?fbclid=IwAR10CSXoXHiLVFBqkddSV3d3HuBLYUowta4aY9M3HKxIkb3hsyCU-Sf8INg>

**Days Before School Starts, CPS Still Won't Say How Many Workers Have Been Disqualified By Background Checks**

[http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-chicago-school-background-check-results-20180828-story.html?fbclid=IwAR2DJzNC1R2b642NpUZirttcN6kigRRbjJDgqwk7sj8\\_8TWdOk9axsw-bQ](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-met-chicago-school-background-check-results-20180828-story.html?fbclid=IwAR2DJzNC1R2b642NpUZirttcN6kigRRbjJDgqwk7sj8_8TWdOk9axsw-bQ)

**Video Spreads Online of New Britain High School Students Having Sex in Art Class**

[https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/hartford/video-spreads-online-of-new-britain-high-school-students-having-sex-in-art-class/1490047067?fbclid=IwAR3M-aFxpIT4a82KTL6kGDYKQ8dt77v2\\_4j9htQlrAWKia6o6eNCIMWWP7w](https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/hartford/video-spreads-online-of-new-britain-high-school-students-having-sex-in-art-class/1490047067?fbclid=IwAR3M-aFxpIT4a82KTL6kGDYKQ8dt77v2_4j9htQlrAWKia6o6eNCIMWWP7w)

### **School Administrators Arrested Over Failure to Report ‘Fight Club’**

<https://www.necn.com/news/new-england/Montville-School-Officials-Accused-of-Failing-to--Report-Alleged-High-School-Fight-Club-480259753.html?fbclid=IwAR3dYji7sFijTtsRmT37qfMNNOCftuLcQxnFyRI1smzsjCQdnDrIvHJZPk>

### **Teacher Cleared, 3 Others Remain on Leave at Barnard Magnet School**

[https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-haven/teacher-cleared-3-others-remain-on-leave-at-barnard-magnet-school/1782814517?fbclid=IwAR3zOqxwslX4mW3kmP5GQsJL64tL8Gby7xGfFT54Ap9Dob1A\\_EgplBQh5No](https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-haven/teacher-cleared-3-others-remain-on-leave-at-barnard-magnet-school/1782814517?fbclid=IwAR3zOqxwslX4mW3kmP5GQsJL64tL8Gby7xGfFT54Ap9Dob1A_EgplBQh5No)

### **Former Coach at Norwich Free Academy Charged with Sexual Assault**

[https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-london/former-coach-at-norwich-free-academy-charged-with-sexual-assault/1437867750?fbclid=IwAROrPCNDXALF3sQlmggJIHrYp\\_zXUGWXE-cODlqt8iZ4fRLVIw9AEpuBpQA](https://www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-london/former-coach-at-norwich-free-academy-charged-with-sexual-assault/1437867750?fbclid=IwAROrPCNDXALF3sQlmggJIHrYp_zXUGWXE-cODlqt8iZ4fRLVIw9AEpuBpQA)

### **Connecticut Youth Baseball Coach Accused of Soliciting 14-Year-Old Boy**

[https://www.wtnh.com/news/crime/connecticut-youth-baseball-coach-accused-of-soliciting-14-year-old-boy/1728626669?fbclid=IwAR2\\_UNLIHLjR2DHqKe5Lkr\\_RUG3l3W6lvQs3xRI-ohvJRLnrA2paiCQdy8](https://www.wtnh.com/news/crime/connecticut-youth-baseball-coach-accused-of-soliciting-14-year-old-boy/1728626669?fbclid=IwAR2_UNLIHLjR2DHqKe5Lkr_RUG3l3W6lvQs3xRI-ohvJRLnrA2paiCQdy8)

### **Ex-Madison Teacher Sentenced To Three Years In Sexual Misconduct Case**

<https://www.courant.com/breaking-news/hc-allison-marchese-madison-teacher-sentencing-0304-20170303-story.html>

### **Report Says Faculty At Connecticut School Sexually Abused Students For Years**

<https://www.npr.org/2018/08/18/639806407/report-says-7-former-faculty-at-connecticut-school-sexually-abused-students-for->

### **Nearly 60 Connecticut teachers arrested, charged with sexual misconduct since 2005, data show**

<https://www.nhregister.com/connecticut/article/Nearly-60-Connecticut-teachers-arrested-charged-11338115.php>

### **Sexual Abuse at Choate Went On for Decades, School Acknowledges**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/13/nyregion/sexual-abuse-choate-connecticut-school.html>

### **Boarding School: 7 Former Staffers Sexually Abused Students**

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/connecticut/articles/2018-08-18/boarding-school-7-former-staffers-sexually-abused-students>

## ***LEAVE THE HOMESCHOOLERS ALONE. OUR KIDS, OUR CHOICES***

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“The CT State Department of Education shall make available model curricula and frameworks in reading and mathematics for grades prekindergarten to grade four, inclusive, for use by....parents who are \*registered\* to provide home school instruction. Such curricula and frameworks shall be culturally relevant, research-based and aligned with student achievement standards adopted by the State Board of Education. The department shall make such curricula and frameworks available on Internet web site.”

1. CT public school student achievement standards leave much to be desired. Why would a homeschool family want to limit themselves with limited standards?
2. *If the Dept. of Ed is going to make such curricula and frameworks available on the internet, why do we need a law for that? Anyone who can use a computer can access public web information if they choose to...right? If we are not “registered”, we can still do a google search and see the info...right? Yes. And, yes. It’s hard to take this seriously. Whose bright idea is this?*
3. Homeschooler have the fortune to be unlimited in their use of academic, instructional resources.
4. Homeschoolers use any of the hundreds of thousands of resources available for instructing their children.
5. Homeschoolers know from experience that a quality education can be had for little cost compared to the per pupil expenditures of the public schools.
6. Homeschoolers have the world as their classroom; unlimited resources for learning in real life, not just one classroom or one building for 12 or more years.
7. CT Homeschool Network offers numerous, quality educational resources for instructing our children – many of which are also free of charge. They are even free for the public schools to access because they are listed on our website, too! Cthomeschoolnetwork.org. There are more.

CT homeschoolers do not need to register, and they certainly do not need to register to view listings of the CT State Department of Education’s publicly published “curricula and frameworks”. **Why would they want to limit their children to one set of standards? Why would they want to limit themselves to the same set of standards that has, in some cases, failed children whose parents have removed them from that system? Do we have register now to obtain a public document?? Isn’t the State Dept. of Education is a public agency – the documents are public documents? Are we understanding now that we have to register to obtain a public document?**

**Contact info:**

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