

March 1st, 2019.

Cecilia Cruz

Groton, Connecticut.

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

Honorable members of the Education Committee,

I am opposed SB-874, specifically Section 17 (amendment to section 10-184) and Section 18, (amendment to section 10-1600). I respectfully ask that you vote to strike them.

My husband and I, a military family, began homeschooling our eldest child because he suffered from bullying while attending public school. He was in Kindergarten and was bullied not only by other students but also by his teacher and staff. Both the administration and the teacher ignored our concerns. The constant bullying and the focus on preparing children for standardized tests, instead of on developing a love of learning and nurturing a child's inquisitiveness, crushed his spirit. By the end of the school year, he had developed anxiety, to the point of constant teeth grinding. At 5 years old, he felt like there was something wrong with him. He was also terrified to speak up about bullying incidents to teachers. For his health and safety, we chose to homeschool him and his younger sibling. After a year and a half homeschooling, he is now a healthy, happy, and well-rounded child. Both our children have developed a passion for learning. But it was my husband and I who helped develop this passion, and who helped our child get better. The public school system, while we understand that for some it works, it failed our family. Forcing us to comply with Section 17 means I would have to register my children with the very institution that, in our case, hurt our child.

I would also like to add that I feel Section 17 targets parents who homeschool in a discriminatory way. As if we were hiding doing bad things and need to be policed. When in truth, we aren't. Also, per what is stated in Section 18, homeschoolers have not asked for "standardized/model curricula" and therefore shouldn't have to (or ever be forced to) adhere to it nor should tax payer money be spent in something that isn't needed. Furthermore, the state's Department of Education already provides Common Core Guidelines online, accessible to all. Under the current law, a parent's obligations concerning their child's education are clear and do not require new regulations. There are thriving homeschooling communities in Connecticut. One where, us the parents, along with other members and institutions of the community provide lessons or programs for homeschoolers. There are even activities for homeschoolers inside the military base. We do field trips to museums, firehouses, police stations or USPS. We participate in community service events. All without tapping into resources allocated for the public schools

in a state that is currently in an economic crisis. I ask that you please listen to the people that would be affected by these amendments.

I urge you to strike Section 17 from SB-874 and to also remove homeschoolers from the language in Section 18 from SB-874.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Cruz