

February 27, 2019

RE: OPPOSE Sections 17 & 18 of SB 874

Dear Senators Looney and Duff, Representatives Aresimowicz and Ritter, and Education Committee Members,

As you know, the Joint Committee on Education is considering Connecticut Senate Bill 874 on March 1, 2019. SB 874 contains many amendments to the education policies in Connecticut, two of which affect Homeschool families.

As a Homeschool parent, I strongly oppose these changes to the current Homeschool policies in Connecticut.

It is quite alarming that Section 17 would require “[t]he parent ... to ... personally appear annually at the school district office and sign a registration form indicating that such child will be receiving home instruction” (SB 874 Section 17 ll.623-627). This is a vast change to General Statute §10-184, which allows me, as the parent, to obligate myself to the full instruction of my children at home. The current wording of General Statute §10-184 recognizes the constitutional rights of parents to direct the education of their children through home education. Requiring further regulations will only increase the burden on families and administrators at the local level; it will not increase the education of any home educated student.

As a parent, I am already asked to send in a voluntary Notice of Intent each year, informing my school district of my intentions to homeschool. This current system has worked successfully for over thirty years, a system that was developed by homeschool organizations alongside the Department of Education. In a system that is already taxed to its limit, there is no need to burden the local school district with more families. By forcing homeschooling parents to show up in person, it will only blur the lines of separation of public-school responsibilities and a homeschool family’s responsibilities. It will open the door to more errors and more misunderstandings, causing more distrust between the two entities.

General Statute §10-1600 was set up in 2012 to give educators “[m]odel curricula and frameworks in reading and mathematics for schools and districts identified as having academic achievement gaps” (GS§10-1600). Section 18 of SB 874 would now include “parents who are registered to provide home school instruction” (SB 874 Section 18 ll. 652-653). Not only is it incredibly derogatory to include all homeschool families in an “achievement gap” statute, but it is totally unnecessary. As home educators, we can choose a curriculum that best suits each learners’ needs. It is not necessary to align our curricula choices with that of the local school systems; this will only cause further confusion for the Department of Education, opening the door for further regulation of our home-chosen curricula.

Again, as a successful home educator of almost ten years, I fervently oppose Sections 17 & 18 of SB 874. I ask that you vote NO to these sections of the bill, as these changes do not represent what home educators seek. There should never be a requirement for home educators to personally appear in front of their local school board, in order to educate their own children. As a home educator, I have no need of state approved curricula. Please consider these changes as an affront to home educators in Connecticut and vote NO to Sections 17 & 18 of SB 874.

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Denison
East Haddam, CT