

Testimony for Public Hearing

Education Committee

March 1st, 2019

Stacy Dourado

Colchester, CT 06415

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

Good Afternoon. I am a parent teacher and my name is Stacy Dourado.

I am writing to let you know that I am against 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. Not only do I believe that these changes are unnecessary and drastic, as Connecticut's current laws surrounding home education are quite clear and adequate, but I believe it is incredibly deceptive and underhanded to bury such changes in a much larger bill that primarily focuses on public school system changes. The two should not be tied together in the same bill. These drastic changes border on invading an individual and parent's Constitutional rights.

The requirement to appear in person to register is blatant discrimination against families that choose home education. Neither parents of public school children nor private school children are required to appear in person annually to register with the school or department of education. This discrimination becomes all the more alarming when you understand that the intent of this physical appearance is absolutely intended as an opportunity for the public school officials to judge the parent, children, and any information they gather with the intent of forwarding this information along to the Department of Children and Families to "cross check." It is effectively punishing all home educators for a crime that they have not committed. As the Department of Children and Families already has all of the legal freedom they need to enter any home, regardless of choice of education system, and remove a child without even providing proof of wrong-doing this discriminatory registry is completely unnecessary. This will not make a department already under federal investigation any more effective. It is also founded on a completely baseless notion that children educated at home are at a greater risk of abuse or neglect. In fact, you would be hard-pressed to find any data to back up that notion. DCF must be held accountable for their own failures. The state should not be infringing on parents' rights to cover up their agency's failing.

In addition, parent educators do not require "model curricula and frameworks in reading and mathematics" be provided to them by the Department of Education. Presently the Connecticut Department of Education provides access to the Connecticut Core Standards for anyone needing in-

depth information and guidelines on state standards, for free through their website. I am concerned that this could be a gateway to mandating curriculum for children educated outside of public school, The ability to have more control over curriculum is often why parents choose home education. It is not necessary to include this in this bill, or any new legislation. Doing this is a direct stab at all home education and the rights and control of parents who choose this.

I would also like to point out in a time of mass exodus from this state, that our laws surrounding home education freedoms and rights are a big part of why many families have chosen to relocate here or chosen not to leave yet. If this bill goes through with these changes you can expect to see many of those families feel that nothing justifies staying any longer in a state that is financially drowning many and slowly stripping people of every individual right they have.

Again, I would like to emphasize my opposition to Governor's Bill 874, specifically Sections 17 and 18. The change to Section 10-184 is profoundly discriminatory, and to Section 10-1600 unneeded.

I thank you for your time and consideration.