

February 28, 2019

Testimony Regarding SB 874 (opposed)

Good afternoon,

I would like to voice my opposition to SB 874 'An Act concerning Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut'.

For the homeschooling families I know homeschooling is a way of life. Absolutely everything they do throughout the days and weeks revolves around their children's education. Every trip to the grocery store, every holiday, every doctor appointment and vacation becomes a fieldtrip, a lesson, a learning experience their families have together. These lead to many meaningful family conversations and result in great questions, further research and reading, and often times great out of the box ideas that lead to creative play, more trips, or other topics to explore. I can tell you first hand that homeschooling is a big undertaking; but for those that have kids, you KNOW that there is no one in this world that cares more or wants more for their child than a parent.

I oppose SB 874 for the same reason many of you and your constituents probably choose not to send your own children to public schools. In my grandchildren's school district of Torrington many of the schools, including the schools they would attend, have ratings well below the state average (greatschools.org). As a homeschool community we stand together because these are our children's "classmates", and these parents are essentially our coworkers. It's a loving, caring, respectful, and diverse community. We share ideas, congregate for trips, co-ops and clubs, and we share our troubles and experiences along the way.

Some of us have already been faced with unnecessary and arduous requests for information on our children. Some have been asked to meet with officials and unfortunately some have even had instances of retaliation from their school districts for their choice to homeschool.

In-person registration would put each and every homeschooler in these situations unnecessarily on a routine basis. The law states "*All parents and those who have the care of children shall bring them up in some lawful and honest employment and instruct them or cause them to be instructed.*" and this registration is an infringement of our current law, that will undoubtedly result in an interaction between schools and parents and fuel a constant debate on what is believed to be best for our children, putting families on defense for their decision to do so and instilling fear of the school system in our kids. Our state and federal laws allow us the right to instruct our kids and having us register to no apparent benefit, without any justified reason with the school districts we've already chosen not to associate with; is an infringement of these rights.

The people you see represented before you at the Capital on March 1st are not only caring parents who are here to defend their children's educational freedoms, these are the same people that voted you into office. The homeschoolers of CT are a community of GOOD, caring people who live, work, and pay taxes here. We are not hidden or isolated. We are the ones who fill your library programs, frequent town playgrounds, partake in every park and rec program available, participate in scout troops that provide community service to your towns, and while we support CT towns in these ways we receive zero tax break for freeing up the student resources in our already short staffed public school systems.

As I stated before, homeschooling is a chosen way of life. It is a foundational decision that many families have already made and whole-heartedly are determined to continue. Please keep this in mind when considering this bill.

I ask that you please vote no to homeschooler registration.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Duane  
Southington, CT