

Testimony for Education Committee Public Hearing, March 1, 2019

Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, and members of the committee:

My name is Kenneth Farrington from Naugatuck. I am opposed to sections 17 and 18 of SB 874.

There is no need to require home-schooling parents to report in person and register the fact that they are home-educating their children. This is an invasion of privacy; it would conflict with current statutes, infringe on parents' rights, and add to the administrative burden of local and state agencies. It does not solve any problem or help implement the governor's budget recommendations.

The current wording of Section 10-184 of the general statutes gives parents the responsibility for their children's upbringing and instruction in specific subjects, and allows parents the option to do the instructing themselves or to assign the task to others. Adding this mandatory reporting requirement is counter-intuitive to that wording, making parents answerable to the local school district and other state agencies if they decide to home school.

This is also intrusive. There is no indication of who will or won't be allowed access to the information submitted on such a registration form. This invasion of privacy and lack of protection opens the door to further intrusion by state agencies and further government control of home schooling.

This legislation is attempting to solve problems that don't exist. Test scores show that home-schooled students consistently score higher academically than students in public schools.ⁱ Several recent studies demonstrate that the rate of child abuse is lower among home-schooled children than those attending public school.ⁱⁱ Even the mandated abuse reporting in public and private schools doesn't result in fewer abuse cases after children reach school age.ⁱⁱⁱ Why should home-school parents, then, be required to report to a system which doesn't keep children any safer, and has consistently lower achievement scores?

The modern home education movement in the US has a long, successful history with very little government oversight. I am part of that history, as I was home-schooled here in Connecticut, K through 12. My test scores were consistently above the 90th percentile, and my home school experience was beyond excellent. I began my successful piano tuning and repair business before graduating high school twenty years ago, and today I'm able to support my wife and five children on one income without any state aid.

Homeschoolers are independent, responsible, involved. They care deeply about the welfare and education of their children. Home school graduates are statistically more successful, involved, and contribute more to society.^{iv}

There is no evidence that increased government regulation or control of home schooling will solve any problem. Mandating in-person registration by home-school parents is intrusive and unnecessary.

Please vote "no" on Sections 17 and 18 of SB 874. Thank you.

ⁱ A 2010 peer-reviewed study of home-schooled students showed that they “score, on average, at the 84th to 89th percentile on all subtests.” It also reveals that “There is no relationship between the degree of state regulation (control) of homeschooling and student achievement.” (<https://www.nheri.org/academic-achievement-and-demographic-traits-of-homeschool-students-a-nationwide-study-2010>) Analysis of test scores also shows that home school students are no more likely to “fall through the cracks” academically than are their public school peers. (<https://homeschoolingbackgrounder.com/homeschool-effect-oregon>)

ⁱⁱ <https://homeschoolingbackgrounder.com/research-indicates-homeschoolers-lower-child-abuse-rate-than-average> See further references cited in this article.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services “Child Maltreatment 2016”
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm2016.pdf>, page 19

^{iv} <https://hslida.org/content/research/ray2003/HomeschoolingGrowsUp.pdf>