

Proposed Governor's Bill 874 – Vote No to Sections 17 and 18

Dear distinguished members of the Education Committee,

Governor's Bill 874 is titled "An Act Concerning Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut". Hidden in 985 lines of Governor's Bill 874, in sections 17 and 18, are 6 lines that require home schooled parents to annually register each child they plan on home schooling in person at the Public school district office. There is no reason given for why home school parents are now being asked to register to do something that they have the constitutional right to do or why this is required to be done in person at a public school district. I could understand going to the public school district to register your child to receive an education from a public school, but it makes no sense to go in person to register that you are rejecting their public schools.

I ask that you vote no on Bill 874 because it infringes on the rights of parents' freedom to educate their children, it imposes registration without a reason, requires in person registration that can be used to intimidate home school parents, and is the first step in the state usurping the rights of parents by regulating home schooling.

Who do children belong to and who has the right to decide what the proper education should be for them? This has been argued by many philosophers and statesmen through the ages. Some would argue that a child is a creature of the state. If we were in a communist country, this would be true – the state would regulate the education of every child to ensure the government could control their beliefs.

Thankfully we live in the United States of America and the SCOTUS rejected this notion in the 1923 case of *Myer v. Nebraska*. The court said: "Although such measures have been deliberately approved by men of great genius, their ideas touching the relation between Individual and State were wholly different from those upon which our institutions rest, and it hardly will be affirmed that any legislature could impose such restrictions upon the people of a state without doing violence to both letter and spirit of the constitution."

What bill 874 is trying to do in section 17 and 18 is to force parents to register the children with the state if they home school in person at a public school district office. First, parents have the right to determine how to educate their child and should not have to register to exercise that right. Second, parents should not have to go to an institution they have rejected to register. Third, forcing parents to go to a public school district office will put home school parents in a situation where they can be intimidated by the large public school system.

This is clearly the first step in the state trying to regulate private instruction and usurp the right of parents to direct the education of their children. In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, the SCOTUS said "The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations."

Please vote no on Bill 874 because it infringes on the rights of parents' freedom to educate their children, it imposes registration without a reason, requires in person registration that can be used to intimidate home school parents, and is the first step in the state usurping the rights of parents by regulating home schooling.

Respectfully,
Brian Hall