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Sen. Looney et al, Members of the Education Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Dear Sen. Looney et al, Members of the Education Committee:

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

I am writing in **strong and complete opposition** to the above-named bill especially section 17 as it is currently written. The changes proposed are non-sensical on many fronts. Requiring homeschool families to register with local districts to create a pass-through database for DCF is discriminatory and pejorative. There is no such requirement for parents of public or private school children.

As a pediatric emergency physician, I am intimately familiar with the characteristics of abused and neglected children within the course of my usual practice. Unfortunately, I am also aware of the spectacular failings of the Department of Children and Families in the context of providing relief for these children. DCF does not have the resources it needs to do its job well.

It has become clear this year that the Office of Child Advocate blames the death of Matthew Tirado on a system which allows homeschooling without yearly, in-person, registration. This could not be further from the truth. This child was failed by DCF which had been contacted early and often to intervene within this abusive family. Having a parent register in person would not have affected his outcome. This hidden/buried provision within this omnibus bill is a veiled and misguided attempt to validate the erroneous conclusion that there are many homeschooled children within our state who are abused and neglected purely due to the risk presented by their home education. This has never been shown to be the case. Homeschooling is not a form of abuse nor neglect. DCF needs to be utilizing its limited resources in a more efficient and directed way to protect the children of Connecticut.

Please do not support this bill as it is currently written. Please consider instead increasing funding and organizational support for the Department of Children and Families to do its work in a tempered, efficient, compassionate way to help those children, no matter what their educational format, who may need it.

Sincerely,



Andrew Heggland, MD