

Dear Honorable Members of the Connecticut Education Committee,

I am writing to you in opposition to proposed language in Sections 17 and 18 of SB 874.

I am a stay-at-home mom with a Masters Degree in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development and have been home schooling my two sons for four years. My boys attend a home school co-op twice a week for twenty weeks out of the year, participate in local athletic and arts programs, attend summer camps, volunteer, pursue their hobbies, and spend time with their friends in addition to learning at home. This is typical of home schoolers in CT.

It is my understanding that the language requiring home schoolers to register annually in person, as described in section 17, is an effort to ensure the safety of home schooled children. Unfortunately, I fail to see how this would afford vulnerable children any protection. Is there precedence? I would be interested to hear the reasoning behind this idea. Parents engaged in abuse or neglect of their children are certainly capable of appearing in person once a year to register, which no one being the wiser. How would this help children?

Section 18 outlines a plan to invest in online curricula and make it available to home schoolers. This is unnecessary, as there is already an abundance of online curricula available. There are so many options, in fact, that home schoolers often find themselves in a position of option paralysis! "Which curriculum should I choose?" must be the most common question asked by home schooling parents! Not to worry-there are already resources available to assist parents with this decision.

In my opinion, the resources that would be invested in developing this online curricula would be better spent on directly identifying at-risk children via Child Protective Services and social workers at public schools. Invest in training social workers. Invest in expanding staff. Abuse at school is a common reason that many parents have chosen home schooling in the first place.

Connecticut is a wonderful state in which to home school because the state trusts parents to do what is best for their children. As a result, thousands of children that were struggling are now flourishing. Colleges are actively recruiting home schooled teens. I believed the proposed increases in oversight of home schooling is misguided and will fail to provide the intended results.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Killin

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