

Dear honorable members of the Connecticut Education Committee,

My name is Deltra kroemer and I'm writing you today because I oppose the Governor's Bill No. 874, particularly sections 17 and 18. I am a home educator and have enjoyed the freedoms of homeschooling in Connecticut for the past 8 years. I do not want those freedoms infringed upon to any degree and the changes being proposed will do just that.

Regarding section 17, the idea of requiring an in person appearance to made by homeschoolers to register with systems they do not wish to take part in not only strikes me as inconvenient due to the already full lives many of us lead, but also accusatory. As a woman of color, I am too familiar with discrimination and it is not something I am willing to subject myself and my family to. It is something many who look like me have sought to avoid by removing their children from the public school system. Who will be judging my family and other families because we have the audacity to believe we don't require the government's help in educating our children? How much staffing and funding will be poured out for this needlessness?

Regarding section 18, home educators do not need nor want government assistance in seeking curriculum. Home educators are resourceful and the community is inundated with curriculum choices. Choices traditional schools lack, choices that allow families to teach in a way that their child learns and to pursue personal interests as opposed to having a set curriculum that aims to be for all children but cannot be. This is one of the main points of homeschooling, the freedom to teach what we see fit and how. I am a product of Connecticut public schools and can say with confidence that there is no curriculum the government could offer me that represents me and my children better than what I can create or locate myself.

In closing, while I appreciate the concern I believe is at the heart of many of you for all children, I am asking you to believe the best about homeschoolers. I cannot emphasize enough the time and commitment this takes; homeschooling is an act of love. We are invested in our children and are not willing to let them fail. We aren't willing to watch them slip through cracks the way countless children have done in public schools. As a person of color, I'm used to being prejudged, underestimated, underrepresented and scapegoated. I do not want the educational choices I make for my children to be one more reason we are discriminated against. I want you to believe the best about me and this community of parent educators I am a part of. The greatest defense we have against neglect and abuse (which statistically is low risk among us) is community. I can confidently say, Connecticut has one of the strongest homeschool communities in the country. The changes to law being proposed will weaken - not strengthen - us and our families.

I thank you for your time in hearing my heart and concern and I ask that you vote no on SB 874.

Deltra kroemer
Waterbury, CT