

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

As a voting Democrat, I will absolutely be rethinking my voting positions now that I have seen SB - 874, which has been fabricated by those who believe that individual liberties are to be exchanged for labels, check-ins and other coercive maneuvers that would limit the joys of free-range learning and treat parents like parolees. It seems as though the committee doesn't believe that the education I received in CT was good enough for me to now lead my own beautiful children in the ways that will serve them best without coercion and surveillance. I ask you to please strike section 17 & 18 from this bill entirely.

My experience in CT was overwhelmingly awful and destructive to my psyche, sense of well-being and purpose. I personally was harmed both physically and verbally by other children and ridiculed and ignored by my teachers and administrators alike, from 3rd to 12th grade. Where was the concern for me in the public school system? It is absolutely no surprise to me that the Connecticut Supreme Court cited the court's finding that there is "clear evidence of failing public school, unequal treatment, and illiterate students being graduated" from our public schools. Additionally, "The State has not rationally, substantially, and verifiably defined what an elementary and secondary education means." and "Lack of standards means that children are graduating from high school unprepared." 1

Despite every educational overhaul of the last 40 years, grades have flatlined, and even the most inspired teacher finds their hands tied. Job performance reviews hang on the edge of each test result. We are teaching to the test by design, and short-answer tests do nothing to amplify critical thinking skills.

My children, free to learn in the manner that suits them best, are absolutely thriving in their various weekly chosen classes with other kids age 3-13. There is no bullying, none of the anxiety public schooling puts on them, no unhealthy competition to get arbitrary grades given them by people who are essentially strangers, and no constant fear for their safety. I will not register with, or and lower my standards to that of the very schools that so clearly failed me at every turn, especially when statistics show how much better most children do who are parent-taught and life-educated over institutionally-educated. On top of which, connecting "life-schooling" families with DCF for what amounts to surveillance is discriminatory, absurd and will not be tolerated. According to the US Dep't of Health & Human Services, children are 371x less likely to sustain parental abuse in a parent-led home-school setting than their peers in public institutions. 2

If people want to get involved with and enjoy their local schooling, they are free to do so. However, when a family does not opt for that choice, the state has no business dictating how a homeschooling parent should instruct their children, any more than the school lunch lady should come to their house to instruct the parent on how to cook for them. I guarantee my kids eat better outside public institutions, and this is how they learn better too. If this bill progresses, I will not hesitate to reconsider the way I vote or leave the state to go where individual liberties are celebrated and parental rights are respected.

This bill is legislative creep, and I request, as a current Democrat, a citizen of Connecticut and a "life-schooling" parent, that you DO NOT support this bill or any current or future amendments to it that could in any way erode constitutional and parental rights. Flowers do not grow in a box, and our children are the most beautiful blooms in existence both in school and out. Please

support every measure that will treat them each as the precious individual wildflowers that they are.

I thank you for your time and consideration,
Respectfully,
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1. Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Rell case 327 Conn. [650 - 2018](#)
http://ccjef.org/wp-content/uploads/CTC_October2016_web3.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0tgIB-_iXCrizNhBLHcf4APh9w0nCqE9PnYnQtdKp9bYwal6bYn9584a0
2. <https://homeschoolingbackgrounder.com/child-abuse-neglect-fatalities-2016/>