

Dear Distinguished Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing to state my STRONG OPPOSITION to SB 874, specifically sections 17 and 18.

Although my first instinct regarding these sections was to feel they were an infringement on my rights as a parent educator, an effort to thwart my parental freedoms, and to discriminate against a minority community in our state, I have since been made aware that the ulterior motive of this section (#17) is to provide the information to the Department of Children and Families, so that they may crosscheck the names of home educating families with their files. I am outraged that our legislature is willing to be a participant in this scheme. It is outright discrimination against a minority and quiet community of this state. A community of families that asks nothing of you, and causes no harm to others. One could even say that home educators add enrichment to the state as our students provide their time in charitable ways, take advantage of the various art and science museums in the state, and utilize the state community college system. The freedoms that home educators enjoy in Connecticut have been a draw for other families around the country, at a time when Connecticut does not have much to offer.

One must ask oneself what the reasoning is behind such a bold and discriminatory move by our government. Are home educated families more likely than those that attend public or private school to be abusive or neglectful? Does DCF need to have a list of names that includes, as a majority, families that it has no business having information about? Aren't families with open cases already in the DCF database? If DCF wants to know about the family's education status, why not ask them? And if it is being passed to DCF, who else might decide they want that information for their uses? Where would it stop?

Home educated families have operated without issue (for the most part) for about 30 years with the current statutes. Although there have been some acts of coercion in various districts, trying to force actions from parent educators that are not legally required, such outright discrimination has not been seen. If it was your family that was home educated, would you want to hand over your family's information to DCF?

Again, please remove section 17 and 18 (there is plenty of curriculum for parent educators to choose from, and the state's is already available online for free) of SB 874. Don't let history look back on this legislature as an example of blatant discrimination.

Respectfully,

Amy Monticello
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