

Vote No on SB 874

Please vote NO on SB 874. Homeschooling parents should not be required to personally sign a registration form at their local school district office, and do not need access to model curriculum approved by the Department of Education.

I have been homeschooling for over ten years now. For some years, I chose to notify. For others, I did not. I notified under our old superintendent. When the new one took over, she stopped responding to notifications, and I stopped sending them. A couple of years later, I saw in the news that the parents of public-schooled children in my town had signed petitions trying to have her removed from her position. The library in the local elementary school closed. Thousands of dollars of personal furniture purchases were uncovered. The town is still trying to clean up the mess.

This is a microcosm of issues that I have seen popping up across the entire Southeastern and Northeastern sectors of the state. Connecticut spends more and more money on education, but schools are still strained with inadequate staffing, issues with administration, and the constant call for more funding.

This seems to be the wrong environment into which to add a new regulatory burden that will further strain schedules and mandate all of these new meetings.

There's an old maxim: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The homeschooling laws in Connecticut are not broken. However, the public education system could use a fair bit of work before we start talking about adding more students to their purview by government mandate, students who are already doing fine.

On the second point: when I have met with the superintendent, he has always been happy to offer me full access to the model curriculum mentioned in this bill. In addition, there are multiple websites, both government and private-run, quite willing to offer free access to the same information. If this is of use to me, it is easy to find. However, it is not of use to me. The two children I homeschool are dyslexic and autistic, and the model curriculum will not meet their needs.

Connecticut is actually ahead of the game, nationally, by having signed a law attempting to merely improve public school teachers' ability to recognize dyslexia... only a couple of years ago. To teach my children properly, I had to learn the methods recommended by neuropsychologists and national centers for their respective conditions. The autism/mental health center that offers therapy to my family approves strongly of the alternative curriculum and methods that I use to meet my children's needs. I believe that putting the force of law behind pushing a 'model curriculum', no matter how well-intentioned, will turn mandatory school meetings into an event not unlike a visit from a Kirby salesman. The superintendent really should not be deciding, as a stranger, that my child's therapist, psychologist, and parents are wrong.

Please focus on fixing our public school system, on seeking curriculum standards and administration changes that will improve the public school students' quality of education and quality of life, and balancing the budget while achieving these goals, before turning your focus on homeschooling. Homeschoolers do not have a crisis to solve.

Thank you for your attention,
Mrs. Joy Nanni
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