

Testimony in **opposition** to:

**Senate Bill 874: AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT.**

Submitted by:  
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Dear Senator McCrory, Representative Sanchez, My own representative of the 17th district Leslee Hill, and the other esteemed members of the Education Committee,

My name is Joseph Anthony Narkewicz and I am a 17 year old homeschooled student. Unfortunately, a bill has come before your committee that threatens the prosperity of our state and her residents. Senate Bill 874 would force homeschooling families to register annually, placing us on the same level as convicted criminals. Many people incorrectly think that homeschoolers tend to be "backwards," "poorly-educated" and "overly sheltered." The evidence says otherwise. A 2015 study discovered that African American students who are homeschooled scored 23 to 42 percentile points higher on standardized tests than their publicly educated peers. An article published by NBC news revealed that homeschooled college applicants stand out above their peers. The same article quoted Katie Fretwell, Amherst College Dean of Admission and Financial Aid as saying that homeschooled applicants tend to have "thicker folders, in a good way," and that they can be "innovative thinkers with a lot to bring to the table." If we are so "backwards" that we have to register ourselves like convicted sex offenders why do homeschooled students have a 40% lower chance of dying of abuse than the average student nationally? (Williams, Rodger. (2017, July 28). Homeschool child fatalities fewer than the national average.) These are facts that I implore the committee to consider.

Not only would this bill place homeschoolers in the same category as sex offenders, but it could actively hurt the economy of the State of Connecticut. From personal experience, I know that many homeschooling parents and students consider their freedom of education one of their most important rights. It is possible, that if SB874 is passed into law it would result in yet more citizens leaving our state. Common sense dictates that if a group of people can no longer find a desired commodity in their area of residence, they will seek to relocate. I fear that SB874's passage would result in an exodus of valuable residents from our state. Unfortunately, this is not the worst possible consequence of the potentially disastrous Senate Bill 874. SB874 sets the dangerous precedent of further government regulation of education. If, in the future, the party of an extremist were somehow able to win power in Connecticut, there would be little to stop them from educating children with only the information the ruling party would see fit. To conclude, despite the fact the studies show that homeschoolers score higher and are less likely to die of abuse than their publicly educated peers, Senate Bill 874 would place them in the same category as convicted sex offenders. This bill would also raise the possible of yet more economic damage to our state. I, like the majority of other homeschooling families, am not a threat to ourselves or to others. I urge the committee to strike down Senate Bill 874. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony, and for your service to our state and nation.