

Testimony in **opposition** to:

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

Submitted by:
Traci A. Narkewicz
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Dear Sen. McCrory, Representative Sanchez, my own representative Leslee Hill, and the other esteemed members of the Education Committee,

My name is Traci Narkewicz. I have been a resident of Connecticut for 18 years, and a homeschooling mother for nine. I wanted to share with you my vehement opposition to this effort to vilify, scapegoat, and regulate the thriving, vital and growing homeschool community in Connecticut. This effort has most recently manifested itself in the form of SB874, currently under consideration by your committee. **Sex offenders and assault weapons are registered in our state. Law-abiding home-schooled families should not have to be.** This bill does not give the Department of Children and Families any additional legal recourse in pursuing substantiated allegations of child abuse. It is highly subject to misuse by three agencies desperate to blame the homeschool community for their lack of oversight in the Matthew Tirado case, and will unnecessarily violate the privacy and freedom of Connecticut families to educate our children outside of the public school paradigm. People who want the state to regulate homeschooling may have good intentions but they have no empirical evidence to support their claims that more government control will solve any problem. In fact, they have not empirically established that there is a problem to be solved.

Before I address the bill further, please be aware that:

1. Children educated at home produce scores on standardized academic achievement tests 15-30% higher than those educated at public schools. Those statistics increase for African American students. They score 23-42% higher when home educated. (Ray, 2015)
2. Children educated at home are 371 times less likely to be abused than children educated at public school. (hsroadmap.org) and 40% less likely to die as a result of neglect (Williams, 2017). Every day, the media carries stories of public school children abused by their peers, by much older children at school, by sports teams, club advisors, volunteer coaches, school bus drivers, administrators, custodians, professional and non-professional aides, school resource officers, and unfortunately even occasionally by teachers. Our children are not more likely to have abuse identified under the care of school personnel; they are more likely to **be** abused by school personnel.
3. Studies show that children who attend public schools exhibit problem behavior scores (aggressive, loud behavior) eight times higher than home-schooled children. (Shyers 1992) and multiple studies show increased sociability scores for the home educated. Children that live in a peer-dominant culture are at greater risk for negative peer influences, such as rejection and deviance training. Research has demonstrated that increased **parental** (emphasis mine) monitoring can increase successful socialization and personality development. (Medlin, 2000; Taylor, 1986; Kelly 1991).
3. Homeschoolers have been shown to adjust better to college and obtain higher freshman year grades than public schooled children. (White, et al, 2007)

4. Homeschooled adolescents are significantly less likely than non-homeschooled adolescents to report use of tobacco, alcohol, cannabis, ecstasy and hallucinogens (Vaugh, et.al, 2015)

5. Children who are not old enough to enroll in school - those under 5 - account for over 84% of child abuse fatalities in this country (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,2012). If the true purpose of this statute were to save the lives of children, it should force ALL families to register, upon the birth of their child, with the local school district or other state agency. But that isn't the purpose of this bill. The purpose is to initiate regulation of home school curriculums, and penalize home schoolers for the failures of the Hartford Public School District, the Department of Children and Families, and the Office of the Child Advocate in the death of Matthew Tirado.

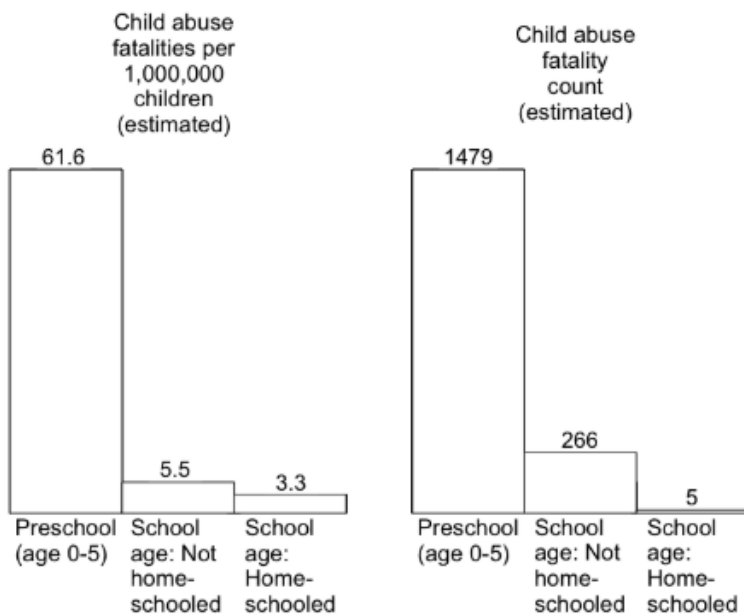
I urge you to not to vote ANY portion of this bill out of committee:

- so that the parents of Connecticut can continue to educate their own children according to their God-given right and responsibility to do so,
- to keep our families' information from investigative authorities without need or due process,
- to protect the right of ALL parents - whether we homeschool or not - to direct the education of our children locally.

Often, we require people to register before attending an event. We don't require them to register NOT to take part. We choose to exercise our right not to "take part" in a public school education for our children and respectfully request that you allow us to do so without unnecessary intrusion. Please do not advance any portion of SB874.

Thank you so much for your attention and for your service to our state.

Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities 2016



Homeschoolers have both a lower fatality rate and a lower fatality count than either of the other two groups.

Any proposal to address child abuse fatalities which focuses solely on homeschoolers — without proportionately addressing the greater problems in the other groups — is clearly not about preventing fatalities.

Such proposals discriminate against homeschoolers.

Based on data from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, U.S. Department of Education and other sources (<https://homeschoolingbackgrounder.com/child-abuse-neglect-fatalities-2016/sources.txt>)