

February 28, 2019

Dear State Representative/Senator,

We are emailing you regarding Section 17 of SB 874 pertaining to homeschoolers. We are opposed to this bill as concerned parents and residents of Connecticut.

We have recently been informed that the mandatory annual registration would become information readily available and given to DCF. DCF would in turn use that list to "cross check" with their former public school students that have been withdrawn to be homeschooled. We do not believe that DCF needs to know whether or not someone is homeschooling, especially if the children have never set foot in a public school before.

Several other states have laws that allow DCF to visit each homeschooling family at the start of each school year, all without probable cause! Why are homeschoolers being targeted? Why would public school students be exempt? DCF doesn't visit their families each year? This is alarming and outrageous – what would possibly be the reason? This is a violation of parental rights, government overreach and a privacy violation! It appears Connecticut is heading in this direction. This is not what our country was founded upon!

Why are homeschoolers are being scapegoated and targeted due to the recent case of Matthew Tirado? The Office of Child Advocate skewed numbers, selectively picked data, and homeschooling was blamed. When in reality it was DCF's failure to properly investigate a student under their care. Section 17 of SB 874 is a shielded attempt at making homeschoolers pay for a crime they did not commit. This is more than alarming!

Some of our concerns are:

1. Registration would be "in-person". In-person registration allows the public school to be judgmental and can lead to discrimination of a person and their family for a variety of reasons such as gender, race, appearance, language fluency, disability, economic status, etc. This is unreasonable! There is no reason to place this burden on innocent families who are statistically safer than those in public school and consistently score higher academically than public school students.
2. Offering model curriculum to homeschoolers from K-4 and aligned with common core would open the door to more regulation and curriculum requirements.
3. What if a neighbor decides to cause some trouble for an unsuspecting homeschooling family and reports them based on false accusations/charges. DCF would become involved through a master list without a warning to the family. What happened to innocent before proven guilty? What if that family was wrongly judged at the time of registering? What other discrimination and targeting would occur?
4. Why is homeschooling is being selectively identified and private schools do not have to register? And do public schools have to submit a listing to DCF as well?

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. I hope to hear back from you.

Sincerely,

John A. Peck
Nicole M. Peck