

Governor's Bill No.874 - An Act Concerning Education Initiatives and Services in Connecticut

My name is Andrea Prusi and I am a parent educator. I am writing to express my deep opposition to the Governor's Bill No. 874, particularly Section 17 (pages 20-21), making changes to Section 10-184, and Section 18 (pages 21-22), making changes to Section 10-1600.

I believe these proposed changes are highly unconstitutional and discriminatory in nature. I am also deeply unhappy with the fact that this is a sneaky way to force families who educate at home to register with DCF, as evidenced by an email reply from Representative Liz Linehan in which she states that "By registering, if DCF crosschecks families with neglect investigations, they can better serve these kids who actually are being neglected and abused." If DCF already has open neglect investigations, they should be doing their job and investigating those specific families. They already know who they are, so there is no reason to require an entire group of people to register. This is just an attempt to give innocent, loving, responsible families information to DCF for no reason whatsoever.

Imagine if a bill was proposed that said all families who have children attending Catholic school, or Hebrew school, or Islamic schools, etc. were required to register in person so their information could be surreptitiously passed to DCF. Now imagine if only one of those groups was required to register in person while the others were not. That would be incredibly discriminatory and unfair. That is exactly what this bill is proposing regarding home educated families. Parents who send their children to religious school, private school, charter school, or even PUBLIC SCHOOL are not required to register in person.

Data from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, U.S. Department of Education and other sources show that .0035% of children educated at home are abused by their parents while 1.3% of children who attend schools outside of the home are abused by their parents. Let me be extremely clear when I say no abuse is acceptable. However, the data shows that children educated at home are at less risk of abuse. Therefore, there is no reason to provide DCF the opportunity to investigate innocent, loving families.

Choosing to educate your children at home is not neglectful. In fact, for many families it takes more time and effort than sending your kids off to school every day. It is an act of love and dedication. Families choose to homeschool for a variety of reasons, and they shouldn't be made to feel like criminals for doing so.

In my experience as a parent educator, I have found an abundance of educational resources and social groups that we can incorporate into our learning routines. My children are not lacking in any way. In fact, they are able to learn in a way that suits their learning style. They are able to study things that interest them. They get to try fun activities with other home educated children. They also participate in activities with children who attend school, so they are very well rounded.

We do not need any curriculum forced on us. When allowed to learn their own way and study things that excite them, children flourish. That is part of the beauty of homeschooling.

I respectfully ask that you vote NO regarding SB. 874, particularly sections 17 and 18.

Thank you for your time,
Andrea Prusi