

February 28, 2019

Dear Honorable Members of the Connecticut Education Committee,

I am writing to respectfully oppose Section 17 and Section 18 of SB 874. These sections should not be included in the proposed bill. It is not right to register lawful citizens of the great state of Connecticut when they have done nothing wrong. Families who have made the decision to home education should not be discriminated against based exclusively on what they have decided is in the best interest of their children. It is never right for a government to discriminate against a minority group. There has never been a reason for home education families to register and there is not a reason now.

Families do not enter into the home education decision lightly. For each family, their reasons may differ, but they all want the strongest, individualized education they can provide for their student child. It feels like an attack when the government is untrusting of families who have followed the state protocols that have been in place for hundreds of years.

As a former public school educator, I saw first hand how detrimental external policies and forces were inside the classroom. Educators, like myself, who received highly effective end of the year ratings, could not teach in a way that was the best for our students. We would sit in meeting after meeting with our colleagues and supervisors about what we needed to do to make the education for our students better, make it so that they would become life long learners. Almost every time, we would come to a policy block, something that someone who was not an educator, who did not know these students, curriculum, or school culture decided was best for our students. We as teachers had to work our amazing ideas around clunky and disheartening policies. High stakes testing that puts language arts and mathematics above all else, developmentally inappropriate expectations of young learners and many more negatives are placed on the backs of teachers, who just want to provide a thorough, interesting, and individualistic education for their students. Please do not begin to put these negative aspects of public education onto the home educator.

Please remove sections 17 and 18 of Bill number SB 874. Avoid starting the slippery slope of unjust, unfair, and unnecessary government oversight into a home education system that is envied by people in other states. Home educators seek out Connecticut as a place to live because it has always been a state that recognizes that the best learning happens without roadblocks. Be an advocate for home educators not a detriment. Understand that when teachers, principals, and superintendents are in meetings to better the education system they are trying to emulate what home educators do every day. Public schools wish they could develop life long learners, but because of the policy roadblocks that are in place they will never have the success that home educators have. Please leave the home education laws, as they have always been, how they were for many of our Founding Fathers, give home educators the freedoms they deserve and have always had.

Thank you,
Amanda Quiello Wallingford, CT