

I submit this written testimony to ask that you oppose the home school portions of SB 874, sections 17 and 18. These sections would fundamentally, negatively change the current statute for homeschooling in CT.

I oppose these sections for 3 reasons: 1., the current statute works well, 2., the changes will burden the schools and homeschooling parents, and 3., and it would lead to more invasive losses of liberty.

Firstly, about 30 years ago, the current statute was written with input from all concerned parties and the compromise has served the state and its residents well ever since. Embedded in this bill is a HUGE change for home schooling, without any explanation of why or discussion with the homeschool community. There is no benefit for the state or need to make this change. A much better use of resources would be to work on the current public school needs.

Secondly, requiring an annual in-person registration, will burden both home schooling parents and school administrators. There is little value to "clocking in" every fall to a local public school just to tell them you are there. The local public school has no jurisdiction over the homeschooling family and it just creates an added burden to an already stressed public school infrastructure. Public school officials have a hard enough time keeping up with providing an appropriate education and subsequent resources to public school students how will they manage this additional task? There will be a cost incurred by the public schools to manage this database and meet with each family to sign papers in terms of money and hours. Another huge question or concern is what will be the use of these new database of home school families? Why is it even necessary? It has been said by some legislators that this list will be used to share directly with DCF to create a 'watch list'. This is ridiculous and a huge invasion into innocent families' lives simply because they choose to homeschool. We need to protect these families and their rights to privacy and choice.

Finally, I see sections 17 and 18 as the beginning of the State to encroach on the rights of parents to direct the education of their children. There is no logical need to require families to register in order to provide an education to their children. I am not currently a homeschool parent, but I COMPLETELY support families' rights to decide how to best instruct their own children. Our current law recognizes that parents are primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of their children as self-sustaining citizens. Most parents are careful to do this. The current statute trusts parents with this care and provides a low burden for schools and parents. Please do not change this statute without considering all the competing interests.

Thank you for considering opposing this unnecessary change to the statute.

Sincerely,
Elissa Rader

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