

S.B. 874 "AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT

Statement for the Record submitted by:

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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

My name is Greg Sabra, a six year resident of East Lyme. I have come here today in strong opposition to SB 874, "AN ACT CONCERNING EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND SERVICES IN CONNECTICUT" and would request that the Education Committee vote NO on this. Specifically, I have grave concerns of the new requirements placed on homeschooling parents. I believe that homeschooling parents should not be required to personally sign a registration form at their local school district office (underlined in page 21 of the bill), and do not need access to model curriculum approved by the Department of Education.

As someone who has lived in the State of Connecticut for the past 6 years and am currently finishing up my 20-year military career to retire in this state, my wife and I have enjoyed the freedom to homeschool our three children; in fact, it is one reason why we have chosen to make this our permanent home. We have been doing this for the past four years, and it has been a remarkable experience where we have gotten to develop and nurture our children. My wife has a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, and I have taught at the US Coast Guard Academy in college level engineering; by far, the most rewarding experience has been educating our own children. We work diligently to provide them with the education we feel that they deserve; we do not harbor any ill will against the public school system nor did we draw them out of the system because we were dissatisfied with the schools, but feel that this is the right choice for our kids, as it allows us to inculcate our values and beliefs into them and raise them as we want.

I know that this bill predominantly centers on a restructuring of the public schools. I am quite confused why this sudden change to homeschooling requirements would slip into the bill; while I don't want to ascribe bad motives to others, it appears that those who drafted this bill hoped that they could slip this change in without notice. They may have even had good intentions; there is false perception that homeschool children somehow need to be "protected from their parents;" and I am offended that the state feels it is necessary to look over my shoulder with how I raise my children.

This bill would introduce unnecessary burdens on our family and unnecessarily infringes on our rights to raise our children the way we would want to. While it may seem to be an innocent requirement to force us to appear before the school to sign a registration instruction, I fear this would be the beginning of infringements on the rights granted in the State and US Constitution. According to CT. Statute 10-184, the State has placed the education of the child in the hands of the parents, with the public school as the back-up when this could not happen. We seem to forget that model was the original model for education of children, and the rise of the public school model didn't happen until much later in the history of our nation. We need to remember that the right to raise our children is as fundamental as the right to "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

In addition, opening "model curriculum" for our use is unnecessary; my wife and I spend hours each year selecting the right curriculum for our children. We ensure they get a well-rounded education and we already know what the requirements are for the state and do not need this. I fear this will continue to grow and will require us to provide the State with our curriculum. We do not need the state dictating what we teach our children. Joseph Stalin, the former Premier of the Soviet Union, stated "Education is a weapon whose effects depend on who holds it in his hands and at whom it is aimed." I fear that if we

march down the road of the State dictating what has to be taught to our children, those who have the power to dictate to others what needs to be taught can override those who do NOT have the power. In this case, the POWER to educate children MUST remain in the hands of the parents...to choose to homeschool or to choose to enter them into the public school system.

I thank you for your time.