

Feb. 28, 2019

Dear Education committee members,

Please oppose SB 874.

My name is Lori Schaffer. I live in New Milford (District 67). I lead educational groups of 50 families from all around Danbury (districts 2, 107, 108, 109, 110, 138) and 80 families around Manchester (districts 9, 11, 12, 13) I also am actively involved as a community leader in Bethel (district 107), where I own property, sit on a 195-unit condo association board, and attend a 200-family Homeschool co-op. And I am involved in church activities in Ridgefield (district 111) and Darien (district 147).

I urge you to delete the reference to providing homeschool parents educational resources in Section 18, line 652-653.

It is unnecessary for the state to develop curriculum suggestions for homeschoolers. We have ample resources from dozens of educational philosophies that address the learning styles, needs, and strengths of every child. There are dozens of homeschool groups in CT where parents can get parent-to-parent support with no judgment, condemnation, or suspicion. There are hundreds of online resources and thousands of curriculum options. Moreover, homeschool materials are tailored to individual students, not to teachers of large groups. Please oppose SB 874 because section 18 regarding resources for homeschoolers is unnecessary effort and a waste of taxpayer money.

I oppose SB 874 Section 17, lines 623-627 of SB 874 dealing with in-person registration of parents providing home instruction to their children.

It has come to my attention that DCF is behind getting information on who homeschools in CT. Why sic the DCF on hundreds of innocent families by making them register with the school system and then having the school system "cross-reference" their records with DCF? It is unethical and tyrannical to submit hundreds of innocent families to interrogation because of their choice in schooling.

I am sharing the following information from Attorney Deborah Stevenson...

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Feel free to share this with your legislators, homeschool friends and groups. Educate others.

From Attorney Deborah G. Stevenson, of National Home Education Legal Defense, in regard to Sections 17 and 18 of S.B. 874

Regarding the comment that registration is needed so that 'DCF can cross-check families with investigations so that no case of neglect goes unnoticed because of an abusive of the homeschool option....That is a BOGUS excuse. Here's why - if DCF is "cross checking" with the public school, **DCF ALREADY HAS AN OPEN CASE ON THE FAMILY, AND DCF ALREADY HAS SOME IDEA**

THAT THE FAMILY WANTS TO, OR IS, HOMESCHOOLING. THERE IS NO NEED TO REGISTER OR TO CROSS CHECK WITH THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TO SEE IF THEY ARE REGISTERED. DCF HAS AN OPEN CASE, AT THAT POINT, AND THEY SIMPLY NEED TO DO THEIR JOB TO INVESTIGATE ACTUAL NEGLECT OR ABUSE. Registering all homeschoolers will not make DCF better at their job.

Legislators should not be duped by a failing DCF system. They have been under federal oversight for decades, and the latest report from the person in charge of that federal oversight indicates they STILL have FAILED on HALF of the items they needed to improve upon in order to escape federal oversight...including ***FAILING ON PROVIDING SERVICES FOR FAMILIES AND CHILDREN, INCLUDING OUTPATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, IN HOME SERVICES, SUSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES, MENTORING, SUPPORTING HOUSING VOUCHERS, FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE RESOURCES, AND READILY AVAILABLE PLACEMENT AND TREATMENT OPTIONS.*** And the Governor and legislators want homeschoolers to register with the public school so DCF can have access to those registrations to "cross-check"? I don't think so. Let your legislators know. *See the linked article below. Also, remind them that the Connecticut Supreme Court in the Connecticut Coalition for Justice in Education Funding v. Rell **case** 327 Conn. 650 (2018) cited the court's finding that there is "clear evidence of failing public school, unequal treatment, and illiterate students being graduated" from those public schools. Again, they want homeschoolers to register with those public schools? I think not. Tell that to all of them. Now.

This is a farce.

What is really happening here is that DCF WANTS HOMESCHOOLERS TO REGISTER, IN REALITY, WITH DCF. But they can't say that openly. Because that really is outrageous. That's why they have to say we need to register with the public school. Don't let them get away with this!

*This article about DCF FAILURES was just published in the CT Mirror.

<https://ctmirror.org/2019/02/26/federal-monitors-report-in-dcf-case-shows-continued-concerns/>

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Schaffer