

Testimony for Public Hearing
Education Committee
March 1st, 2019

Emily Starr RN
Harwinton, CT 06791

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

To the members of the CGA Education Committee,

As a home educator in the State of Connecticut since 2012 I am strongly opposed to the language in SB 874 mandating in-person registration of home schooled children before the BOE as well as the language aligning our home instruction with Common Core initiatives. I propose that these references to homeschooling regulation, particularly in Section 17 and Section 18, be removed.

It has also been made clear to us that the intent of registering homeschoolers is to share this database with DCF. Not only is this discriminatory to our population but as you well know the DCF is already understaffed and ineffective according to their own internal investigations without adding the increased work of monitoring homeschool families needlessly.

I am currently a Registered Nurse and a mandated reporter and I see no value to suggesting that these families need to appear before the school district and be registered like sex offenders. We have done nothing wrong and historically have children that are scoring well above the state average, are sought after by Ivy League schools, and nearly always go on to be productive and valuable members of society. My children and those of my homeschooling peers are continuously praised for their good behavior, intelligence, polite manners, kind dispositions. Homeschooling allows for parents to be the most important influence in a child's life. There is no other person in this world that will advocate for and educate a child better than it's own loving and devoted parent. I have seen this over and over again in families who school their children at home and chose as we did to put our children first every day.

As a young family in Harwinton we absolutely love Connecticut and currently plan to build a new home here. Both my husband and I have grown up here and choose to stay here and raise our family including 3 daughters. We are very involved with our community and have a church family that we adore. We chose to homeschool so that our faith in Christ can take the primary place in our education and our family. We are active in many youth groups including 4-H clubs, Awana clubs, and Quest scouting club #354. We serve others faithfully through our church including local food pantries and soup kitchens and contribute to our society as functional members including the volunteer fire department. Although we have called Connecticut our home for all of our lives I will say that our freedom to homeschool as we please is one of only 2 things that currently keeps us here, the other being the proximity of our close family. We are currently being

taxed to death in this state and it continues to get worse every day including but not limited to increased sales tax and new road tolls. We feel very strongly that mandating registration of homeschoolers and making curriculum recommendations as the gateway to taking away our freedom and right to homeschool. If you start to take away this right we will be packing up and leaving taking our taxes with us and will encourage family to exit this state as well. We will not tolerate excess Government control that is needless and discriminatory.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Starr RN