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RE: SB 874, sections 17 & 18 – Opposed to Homeschool Registration

I am a proud lifelong Connecticut resident who had graduated from UConn Law, Wesleyan University, and Danbury High School. I am also opposed to this proposed registration requirement.

Homeschooling families pay full property taxes to support the public schools, but do not use those resources. Many homeschooling families own small businesses. We are active in our communities, extended families, churches, town sports, and paid extracurriculars. We are not criminals who need to be “checked on” in person every year. It is my understanding that not even sex offenders must present themselves in person each year to register with the state.

When looking for a new home, my family chose to stay in Connecticut in large part because of the favorable homeschooling laws. I have heard from dozens of other families over the years who also factored Connecticut’s existing homeschooling laws into the home purchase decisions. Retaining and attracting young families is crucial for a state in population decline.

This proposed registration does not improve the quality of education or benefit children in any way.

This registration may be in response to the tragic death of Matthew Tirado during the last administration. I have read the entire 79–page report by the Child Advocate. The report details multiple, repeated failures over Matthew’s entire life by his family, his public school, DCF, and the court system. Matthew was enrolled in public school, never homeschooled (although his mother did claim to homeschool his sister). He was non-verbal, autistic, and receiving no services at all. As several op-eds have noted, homeschooling seems to be the “scapegoat” in reacting to Matthew’s death. Registering every homeschooler in the state – including his mother – would not have prevented Matthew’s death.

This registration will increase the size of bureaucracy and further burden local school districts. This adds unnecessary expense in a time of budget austerity.

I am concerned that it singles out homeschooling families for exercising their educational choice. Discriminating against other groups would not be politically acceptable, and it should not be acceptable here.

Thank you for your time.