

House Committee on Education
State of Rhode Island General Assembly

May 17, 2026

Testimony in Opposition of H8531

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education,

My name is Andrea Kakela, & I am submitting written testimony in opposition to H8531. I am writing to you as both a mother & homeschool teacher for 8 years. Before this, I witnessed my stepson go through the Johnston Public School System. His experience was not one I wanted his siblings to go through. He was penalized & held back for defending one of his peers who was being bullied. He has since graduated & is a champion for his siblings, encouraging me to continue educating them in a way he did not experience. I grew up in Southern Indiana, attending a private, Catholic school, and then attended a public high school. My educational experience is not my children's, but my husband & I strive to give them the education & experiences they deserve. Our church provides Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes, which both my children attend on Sunday mornings before mass with their peers, & I teach them from our chosen curriculums during the remaining week. My family is still in Indiana, & thanks to the flexibility of homeschooling, we are able to spend an extended amount of time with them & have many opportunities for additional hands on learning experiences. We are, in fact, in Indiana at this point in time & I am unable to give an in person testimony because of this.

I feel bill H8531 would negatively affect both my own family as well as other homeschool families in Rhode Island. Families should not have to prove they are "good enough" to homeschool without clear evidence of a problem. The existing child protection laws already apply to all families, including homeschoolers & the homeschool families that are law-abiding should not face additional oversight because of isolated cases.

Please vote in opposition of this bill. Thank you for your time & attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Andrea Kakela