

May 18, 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern with the proposed bill H8531. As the primary homeschooling parent for my child, it has been my honor and privilege to curate an academically rigorous and developmentally appropriate curriculum specific to the needs and learning styles of my child. This privilege has awarded us exceptional academic learning experiences as well as instilled strong social emotional skills, extraordinary community support and engagement, fine and performing arts opportunities, ethnically, socioeconomically and culturally diverse relationships, community service projects, athletic pursuits, and more. Moreover, as a homeschooling family, it has given us time to prioritize relationships within our family, with friends, and within our home community of East Providence and beyond. Homeschooling has been a gift to our family and an outstanding educational opportunity for our child.

When reading through the proposed bill H8531, it seems to intend to hold accountable families who are unable to provide adequate education for their child(ren) due to neglect, medical complications, and mental health crises. While seemingly positive, it alarms me that government oversight would target "private schools and at home instruction" when *existing* laws are currently dedicated to the health and safety of our state's youth and children. My understanding is that we have effective laws to enforce DCYF oversight due to instances of abuse, neglect, and truancy.

More specifically, I'd like to address my concerns related to the vague wording of "competency" and "capacity" of the instructor found in Section 16-10-2 (1) (iv). This leaves room for interpretation and no specificity of what qualifies as "competent" or "capable". It questions every law abiding parent or guardian who otherwise is making informed educational decisions for their family. Additionally, Section 16-10-2 (2) (d) pulls into question students who may qualify for an IEP or 504. It is my experience that many families chose to homeschool to enhance individualized learning. This is a conscious choice to offer support and care for their children who may qualify, not in contention with high support needs. These children *thrive* in the homeschool setting due to their highly individualized curriculum as well as academic and psychosocial support systems.

As it stands, I object to proposed bill H8531. Vague language allows for potential broad interpretation and inconsistent enforcement across school districts. Additionally, this proposed bill enhances scrutiny of law-abiding homeschool families without specific evidence that the existing laws are failing. Our homeschool experience has been enriching, and the current laws related to home education are effective as it stands. Parents and guardians should remain as the primary decision makers for their children's education. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Emily McKenzie  
East Providence, RI