

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

Proposed legislation H8531 exposes the growing misunderstanding of government's role with respect to its citizens. Parents have a fundamental right and responsibility to educate their children. Because we have this right, we can grant the government, which the people created to service them, the authority to educate our children on our behalf. As such, government must prove its competency and demonstrate its capacity to that end. H8531 seeks to reverse that relationship of government to people by positioning the school committee and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as the original right-holders in the education of our children thereby relegating parents to subservience before the state, seeking to prove their competency and demonstrate their capacity before being granted the privilege and authority to homeschool. This is a gross usurpation of our inalienable human rights as Americans and a violation of the historical and foundational position government was created to hold in utility to Rhode Islanders.

Consider this thought experiment. What if the Judiciary in Rhode Island asserted the ability to vet the competency and capacity for Representatives to author and vote on laws. They may revoke a lawmaker's ability to perform the most critical function they provide. This would be unconstitutional, but where would you go to challenge this usurpation of power? You would necessarily have to turn to the very branch that exceeded its authority. A parent's right to control the education of their child is also their most critical function. I would hope the example above properly illustrates the ridiculous nature of the overreach being proposed in this bill.

In closing, if a parent criminally neglects their child, they should be prosecuted, but a government cannot and should not vet a person's competency and capacity before that person can exercise their rights as a free Rhode Islander and American for fear that they may abuse their rights and violate the rights of another. Liberty can be scary, that is the price we pay for freedom.

I urge you to oppose H8531.

Sincerely,

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