

Good afternoon, Chairperson and members of the Committee.

My name is Jennifer Curry, and I am a homeschooling parent of 23 years from West Greenwich. Over more than two decades, I have guided my older children all the way through graduation, and I am actively homeschooling my younger children today. Raising and educating an all-boy household—10 sons in total—has shown me firsthand how beautifully educational freedom works in our state. I am here today to voice my strong opposition to H8531.

As a parent, I am the primary facilitator of my children's development. Under Rhode Island law, the fundamental responsibility to ensure a child is educated rests squarely upon the shoulders of the parent.

**R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1**, our state's compulsory attendance law, explicitly states that:

*"Every person having under his or her control a child... shall cause the child to attend school."*

The law dictates that I must cause my child to be educated—it does not dictate that the public school system owns that right by default.

Furthermore, **R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-2** explicitly protects our right to fulfill this requirement through home-based instruction, provided our period of attendance is substantially equal to public schools, and instruction is given in the required subjects of reading, writing, geography, arithmetic, the history of the United States and Rhode Island, and civics education.

The public school system is a service provided by the state. If, and *only* if, I choose to enroll my child in a public day school, does that system become responsible for overseeing my child's daily education. When parents exercise their legal right to homeschool under Section 16-19-2, we retain that direct oversight.

H8531 represents an unnecessary and overreaching shift in this balance. It attempts to insert public school mechanisms into private, parent-led environments where they do not belong, and where the law never intended them to be.

Our current statutes work. They properly respect parents as the ultimate facilitators of their children's education, while ensuring children receive a quality upbringing. I urge this committee to protect parental rights, uphold the established boundaries of Rhode Island law, and vote **NO** on H8531.

Thank you for your time.

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