

To: Representative Joseph M. McNamara and House Education Committee

RE: House Bill H8531

Position: OPPOSE

Submitted: May 18, 2026

Hi, my name is Jonathan Santos Silva, Jr., and I am a 7th grade student who has been homeschooling since kindergarten. I am writing to oppose bill H8531.

Kids should be allowed to be homeschooled by their parents because they have their best interest and know them best.

My homeschooling life is pretty great. I get to sleep in after late night soccer practices. In the morning, I work on completing my language arts and math assignments. After I have finished my daily lessons, I get to read a lot of different books I like, including Manga. Sometimes, I read books for the whole afternoon. I don't just read books for fun, I also learn more about history and science through the books I read. Other things I do during the afternoon are play chess with my siblings, practice soccer, and play Dungeons and Dragons with my friends. Being a homeschooler allows me the freedom to choose and learn in ways that I enjoy. It also brings me many opportunities including plays, dance classes, and even performing in The Nutcracker at Veterans Memorial.

Once a week on Thursdays, we get together with our homeschool friends at Ocean State Co-op. There, we get to take classes about cooking, debate, mock trials, and many others taught by the parents. Because of co-op, I have learned how to take initiative and practice leadership skills. One example of that is when I was younger, I was into the pokemon card game but I had no one to play with, and then my mom and I spoke about introducing it at coop. That is where Pokemon Club was born and where I met some of my best friends. More recently, my friends and I started a Dungeons and Dragons group, where I am a dungeon master. I learn important skills while doing the things I love. I learn about collaborative story telling, planning, improvising, communication, and leadership skills.

When we homeschool, we get to learn in different places. We learn from traveling, from visiting museums, from being out in nature, from going to the library, and from many other places. We don't have to be in school or at home to learn. We are always learning about things around us. While students that attend school may be criticized or punished for going on vacation, we view traveling as a positive learning experience. We don't have to take breaks from learning to go on vacations. We are learning about history, culture, and sometimes language while traveling, because there is no line between school and fun, learning and adventuring.

I fear that this bill will force me to go to school while waiting for approval. The thought of sitting in a classroom for 6 hours is scary to me. I like being able to learn from home and with my mom and family. She's able to customize my learning to suit my learning styles and interests. We get to learn through a lot of experience and it is meaningful to me.

Please don't allow this bill to pass.

Thank you,

Jonathan Santos Silva, Jr.