

Subject: H8531 OPPOSED

Dear Members of the House Education Committee,

I strongly oppose H8531 and ask that you reject this legislation.

As a Rhode Island mother, I take my responsibility to educate and raise my children very seriously. I hold a Master of Business Administration degree, a Bachelor's degree in Psychology, and I worked professionally as a counselor for several years. My educational background and professional experience have given me a deep understanding of child development, emotional well-being, learning differences, and the importance of individualized education.

Homeschooling allows people the ability to provide their children with a safe, supportive, and academically enriching environment tailored to their unique needs. Parents know their children best. We are deeply invested in their success, growth, character, and future in ways no government system can replicate.

This bill unfairly treats capable and loving parents as though they must first prove themselves worthy of educating their own children. That is deeply concerning. The right and responsibility to direct a child's education belongs first to parents, not the state.

I am especially troubled that H8531 would:

- Delay homeschool approval and create unnecessary barriers for families
- Require children to remain enrolled in public school while approval is pending
- Force fit and competent parents to prove they should be ALLOWED to homeschool
- Leave families with no meaningful right to appeal to a court

These provisions create government overreach into private family decisions and place unnecessary stress and uncertainty on parents and children alike.

Homeschooling families are not asking for special treatment. We are simply asking that our rights as parents be respected and protected. Rhode Island families deserve educational freedom and the ability to make the best decisions for their children without excessive government interference.

Parents have a fundamental right to direct the upbringing and education of their children. Homeschooling allows families to nurture not only academic achievement, but also emotional health, family connection, values, and individualized learning. The impact parents have on their children's lives is profound and lifelong.

Please oppose H8531 and protect the rights of Rhode Island families to educate their children according to their needs and values.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kassandra Mitchell

South Kingstown, Rhode Island