

HB 8531 Opposed

As a long-term homeschooling family, we are opposed to HB 8531. Homeschooling in Rhode Island is even now not as free as it should be. Rhode Island homeschoolers are already burdened with overregulation and intrusion into the private education of their own children at home. For us the decision to homeschool comes from a deep faith and religious duty.

HB 8531 would immediately put all homeschooling parents in the category of incompetent, requiring each parent to “prove” ability to educate. Presuming guilt before innocence is acutely contrary to our rights as citizens of the United States of America. It is also profoundly offensive. Homeschooling parents are not the enemy. HB 8531 directly attacks the primacy of the family and the rights of parents to direct the education of their own children.

Should this flawed bill pass, it will endanger children who are homeschooled. How? We have always exceeded the 180 days of school each year, but we sometimes do school outside the public school calendar: weekends, summer, holidays, etc. This allows us flexibility to take scheduled public school days off if we choose to. Many homeschooling families utilize playgrounds, parks and neighborhood open spaces to supplement their homeschool day. My son could be cited for riding his bike for after lunch “recess” or playing with friends at a park during a regular day at school. If this were to happen, our family would be immediately focused on proving our innocence instead of educating our son.

This is just one example of many of why HB 8531 should not advance. It is onerous and hints at a larger agenda of government control of individuals, family, and children. It attacks religious freedom. In this 250th year of freedom in this country it is appalling that this legislation has been introduced.

Oppose HB 8531

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