

To The House of Education Committee,

My name is Meghan DeRita. I reside at 43 Texas Ave., Providence RI, 02904 and I am writing to urge you to **OPPOSE bill H8531**.

As an educator in this state for over a decade, I have taught in many settings from public schools to charter schools. I hold a degree in Early childhood education with a minor in special education. I am very familiar with the structures and expectations within the classrooms in our state and have a strong grasp on state standards as well as the developmental needs of children. I have also had a bird's eye view on the mental health crisis our children are facing right now, especially our children with disabilities and/or traumatic experiences.

I am the mother to a disabled child and know first hand the crippling stress that a school environment would put my child under. From competing sounds, chaotic crowded classrooms, unexpected sounds, alarms and bells, transitions, crammed schedules etc. I know that even with the most direct support his nervous system would be in overdrive and this would lead him into crisis almost immediately.

No child should ever have to be pushed to that point if their parent is ready, willing, and able to homeschool them. If my child had to attend school while we waited for homeschool approval, I am confident he would have entered a severe mental health episode and likely would have needed immediate medical attention.

I know with every fiber of my being that my child would not be here and doing so well if our homeschool journey had been delayed or denied for any of the reasons included in this bill. It is our right as parents to choose the educational experience that works best for our children; after all, we know our children and our own capabilities better than anyone else.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this and thank you for your consideration.

For my child's well being and the mental health of others like him, **please vote NO on H8531**.

Sincerely,

Meghan DeRita

