

Testimony in opposition to H8531

My name is Melinda Pichette Price and I live in Cranston. I am a homeschool advocate with EnrichRI, Rhode Island's largest secular homeschooling organization and I oppose H8531.

A large part of my volunteer position is advising families on the process to have their homeschool applications approved by their district. One of my biggest concerns with the proposed amendment is that the language is vague and will lead to inconsistent decisions. Our current standard has been working in Rhode Island for many years. While we are considered one of the states with the strictest homeschool laws, they are straightforward and easy to follow.

I know that when you look at us you imagine a stereotype. Until I started homeschooling my daughter I imagined all homeschoolers as the Duggars. We are not that. The secular homeschooling community in RI is large, active and thriving. We are atheists, we are Christians, we are Muslims. We have trans kids, we have gay kids, we have kids with special needs. We welcome ALL families.

What happens if a school committee member decides that the parents of a trans child aren't fit to homeschool? Or an autistic child? Or an atheist family? I'd rather not leave the door open to that possibility and I can't imagine you want to either.

Please keep the Rhode Island homeschool standards exactly as they are. Keep them clear, concise and consistent. Keep homeschooling safe and available for everyone.

Thank you,

Melinda Pichette Price
25 Ridgewood Rd
Cranston RI