

House Education Committee
82 Smith St
Providence RI,02903

May 18, 2026
Re: Opposition to Bill H8531
An Act Relating to Compulsory Attendance

Dear Chairman McNamara,

I am writing in strong opposition to Bill H8531, which seeks to increase oversight of homeschooling families.

As a secular homeschooling family, co- director of a secular homeschool Co-op through Enrichri, and a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in RI, I would like to share a few thoughts.

While the intent to ensure high-quality education for all children and let no child slip through the cracks is commendable, a data-driven, analysis reveals that further state restrictions on homeschooling are not only unnecessary but counterproductive. Evidence consistently demonstrates that homeschooling empowers parents to deliver highly successful, individualized education that benefits both the student and the public interest.

The most compelling argument against increased regulation is the established track record of homeschool academic success under current laws.

- **Higher Standardized Test Scores:** Numerous peer-reviewed and secular studies show that homeschooled students regularly score 15 to 30 percentile points higher than public school students on standardized academic achievement tests.
- **The Regulation Paradox:** Data demonstrates that there is no correlation between the level of state regulation and academic outcomes. Homeschooled students in states with low or no regulation perform just as well—and often better—than those in highly regulated states. The vagueness of the proposed standard of “the best interests of the child” has already proven to be a failure in courts. It is too subjective and can not be fairly or justly applied to families.
- **Demographics Don't Dictate Success:** Unlike traditional schooling models where socio-economic status heavily dictates academic performance, the homeschool advantage persists across various income levels, race, and parental education backgrounds.

Higher Education and Civic Readiness

The success of homeschooled students extends far beyond K-12.

- **College Preparedness:** Research indicates that homeschooled students graduate from college at higher rates and maintain higher GPAs than their peers.
- **Social and Civic Engagement:** Secular sociological studies consistently debunk the myth of "poor socialization." Homeschooled individuals are, on average, more politically active, participate more robustly in community service, and report higher levels of life satisfaction as adults.

The Power of Individualized, Secular Pedagogy

From a purely pedagogical standpoint, the strength of homeschooling lies in its flexibility.

Traditional classrooms must teach to the median to manage large groups.

Homeschooling allows for micro-targeted learning.

Whether a child is a neurodivergent learner who needs more time with concepts, a gifted student who requires rapid acceleration, or an aspiring athlete or artist needing a flexible schedule, homeschooling provides a tailored approach that the state public school system cannot replicate. Imposing rigid, bureaucratic frameworks on this ecosystem stifles the very customization that drives its success.

Fiscal Responsibility

Finally, from a practical governance perspective, homeschooling represents a massive financial benefit to taxpayers. Homeschooling parents completely absorb the costs of curricula, technology, and instructional materials, saving the state thousands of dollars per child annually in per-pupil expenditures. Adding regulatory oversight would require diverting public education funds toward administrative monitoring—a counterproductive use of taxpayer dollars.

Conclusion

The data is clear: the current framework of homeschooling freedom works.

Imposing top-down restrictions creates unnecessary administrative hurdles for families while offering zero measurable benefit to student achievement.

I urge this committee to trust the data, respect parental autonomy, and vote **NO** on Bill H8531. The best interests of our children are being served by their dedicated families. Thank you for your time and your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Melody C. L'Etoile, LICSW