

To:
Education Committee Clerk, Lisa Cataldi
HouseEducation@rilegislature.gov

From:
Renee Volpe-Simas, Parent
Warwick, RI 02888
Rvsimas@gmail.com

Regarding: Testimony Opposing H8531

My name is Renee and I am a secular homeschool parent who chose to remove my youngest from the public school system after he completed third grade. I am opposing H8531. It is concerning to see this using vague and subjective language such as "competency," "capacity," and "best interest."

My decision to homeschool came after years of the school system telling me "there is nothing more we can do...", "he just can't read...", "we don't have the resources to help him in class...", "he is falling behind in math due to his reading...", "we no longer will be covering any phonics from 4th grade on...", and the final straw "take comfort in knowing that hospital and government documents are written at a 3rd grade level..."

My son was eager to learn. No behavioral issues besides being a little fidgety in his seat which is easily remedied. Every year, the school system didn't know what to do with him. More flashcards. More time to complete work. Maybe try speech. He was going nowhere. He was in 3rd grade struggling to read basic CVC words. Following along with a curriculum that didn't work for his needs. In a system that was pushing him along as he struggled and lost confidence. His comprehension was off the charts. His ability to read was holding him back. His school was holding him back.

Homeschooling saved my child. He can read! The ability to build a curriculum that works for his unique needs has done in 2 years what school, their resources and their IEP could not. He is now catching up in Math and excelling in Science and History classes built for Middle School. My ability to make primary decisions and work with my child has changed his entire life. He is confident. He is trying his hand at sports. My child is no longer coming home covered in tears and feeling hopeless. **HE CAN READ because of Homeschool.**

Rhode Island's current homeschool law is already working and does not need additional regulation. This bill could allow inconsistent decisions rather than clear standards.

Delays or added barriers to homeschooling could harm children who need immediate educational changes. If I was not able to pivot and choose to homeschool, I know he would have been at the point of no return.

Families should not have to prove they are "good enough" to homeschool without clear evidence of a problem. Public Education isn't one size fits all. It isn't the best decision for everyone. Bills like this cause additional barriers to proper education and mental wellbeing for our children.

Please consider that homeschooling is a saving grace for a child like mine and many others.

Sincerely,

Renee Volpe-Simas

Parent of a soon-to-be six grader who almost got left behind in traditional school