

My name is Sean Harris, and I am the father of an 11-year-old homeschooled child with significant medical and neurological disabilities. I am writing in opposition to bill H8531 because homeschooling has been essential to my son's ability to learn, grow, and succeed.

Before homeschooling, the traditional school environment was overwhelming for him due to his disabilities, including autism, visual and auditory processing challenges, and medical complications related to a brain injury. He struggled academically, socially, and emotionally despite significant support. Homeschooling has completely changed that. He is now successfully completing grade-level work, participating in community activities and homeschool groups, and building friendships in environments that meet his needs.

I am also deeply concerned by the vague language in this bill and the delays it could create for families trying to remove a child from an educational setting that is not working. Parents of medically complex and disabled children sometimes need to make immediate educational decisions in their child's best interest. Rhode Island's current homeschool law is already working, and families like ours should continue to have the right to choose the educational environment that best supports their children.

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