

May 18, 2026

House Committee on Education

Rhode Island State House

[82 Smith Street](#)

[Providence, RI 02903](#)

Re: Testimony in Opposition to House Bill H8531 – “Authorizes school committees to deny or defer approval of a homeschooling proposed plan in certain circumstances”

Dear Chairperson and Members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Susan Parker, and I am from Warwick, Rhode Island.

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill H8531.

H8531 would give local school committees expanded authority to deny or delay homeschooling approval for families under certain circumstances, including prior truancy matters or subjective determinations regarding a parent’s “capacity” or “competency” to homeschool.

I oppose this bill because it unnecessarily expands government control over homeschooling families and places too much discretionary power in the hands of local school committees.

First, parents have a fundamental right to direct the education of their children. Homeschooling has been a successful educational option for many Rhode Island families for decades. This bill creates additional barriers and uncertainty for parents who are trying to do what they believe is best for their child.

Second, the bill uses vague language such as “capacity” and “competent instructor,” which could lead to inconsistent and unfair decisions depending on the school district. Families should not have to fear subjective judgments or arbitrary denials when seeking to homeschool their children.

Third, families facing attendance or truancy challenges are often already dealing with difficult circumstances, including bullying, medical concerns, learning disabilities, anxiety, or family hardships. Instead of creating more obstacles, Rhode Island should focus on supporting parents and students with solutions that are cooperative and compassionate.

Finally, this legislation risks discouraging educational freedom and undermining trust between families and local schools. Many homeschooling parents provide safe, structured, and academically successful learning environments for their children. They should not be treated with suspicion.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to vote against House Bill H8531.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Susan Parker

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[Warwick, RI 02889](#)

House District 22