

Monday, March 8, 2021

Hello, thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing on **HF874**. We were unable to share our testimony during the live hearing today due to time constraints so please accept our written testimony below. Thank you.

We do not disagree with the general intent of the bill. We do, however, have great concerns with the language of the bill and therefore, oppose it as it is written.

1) Easily misunderstood or misused. The language "all children have a fundamental right to a quality public education" can imply that "all children have a 'fundamental right' to being educated publically." We understand this is not the original intent of the bill, but when misunderstood or misused, this statement directly impacts our freedom as parents to choose what schooling is best for our children, and ask that it be rewritten. We further understand that as Rep. Kresha and Mr. Fisco both clarified, the intent of the bill is to provide "*a quality public education for all those 'who would choose' public education*" or in other words, "*if they 'choose to attend public schools'*". If this is the case, why then, not simply include this clarification in the language of the bill? To stress the importance of clarifying the parameters of the bill, we note some of the supporting testimonies from today, in which the scope of the bill was not centered on "public" education; rather, defined the goals of the bill in regards to **education in general** ("*access to education,*" "*quality education,*" and that "*all children have equal access,*" to name a few). We understand these statements may not have been intentionally generalized today, but without clarifying language, one can see how misunderstandings and confusion can quickly occur.

2) Ambiguous language with unintentional harm. The adjective "quality" is undefined and vague as written. We do not disagree with the goal to provide a high standard of education for all students. However, replacing one vague word with another does not solve the subjectivity of the current language. Moreover, the language of the bill grants responsibility to the state, rather than the local schools or parents (who are closest to the children), to establish what "quality" would be in order for each child to "participate" and "achieve" in society. Leaving language deliberately vague is divisive and confusing, rather than empowering. And, giving power to the state to define "quality" does not empower children to actually thrive. Less government and more empowerment at the ground level—those working directly with each child, individually, (NOT by cookie-cutter, uniform standards)—whether public, private or home, is the best "quality" education each child individually can have.

We ask you oppose HF874 as it is written. Please pay more careful attention to the language of this bill for its reckless ambiguity and unintended harm, and revise accordingly. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy Anderson
On behalf of the Anderson Family