

Testimony for Minnesota House Education Policy Committee

From: Mary K. Mueller

Date: Saturday, March 6, 2021

My name is Mary Mueller, and I am extremely concerned about HF874, a bill designed to amend the education clause in the Minnesota State Constitution. This amendment would fundamentally transform education in Minnesota by forcing all children in the state to participate in government schools.

Educational liberty is essential for our state and for the nation! As parents, we cherish the freedom to educate our children according to the principles and philosophies that matter to us. Currently, this freedom is being directly challenged by Minnesota state legislators.

HF874 is designed to eliminate educational liberty in the State of Minnesota by seeking to amend the Minnesota State Constitution to include the following: "All children have a *fundamental right to a quality public education* ..."

With this amendment, public education would be declared a new "fundamental right" for all children in Minnesota. While this may sound pleasant to the untrained legal ear, it means exactly what it says. If public education is legally declared to be a "fundamental right" of all children in our state according to the state constitution, then depriving one's children of a public education would be synonymous with denying them one of their constitutional rights! It's not hard to imagine how this would lead to severe legal consequences for parents who chose private school or homeschooling as an alternative to government education.

Under the new educational paradigm created by this amendment, all children would legally be required to attend a public school. If a child was enrolled elsewhere, the parent could be accused of infringing on their child's newly declared "right." No parent could freely exercise liberty of choice in their children's education. Every parent in the state would be required to facilitate and guarantee their children's attendance at a government school to ensure this newly declared "right" was protected.

This new idea of a "fundamental right" could result in a whole new set of challenges to parental authority in the life of a child. Perhaps it would become normative for parents to be threatened with losing their parental rights if they denied their children their fundamental right of attending a public school. Swift and harsh consequences against parents who choose private school or homeschooling could become the new normal. This amendment amounts to nothing more than educational tyranny.

Educational liberty is a bedrock of freedom. If a particular form of education were to be mandated for all children by our state legislators, they are demonstrating that the best interests of the children are not their priority.

If this amendment were ultimately to become enshrined in our state's constitution, it would effectively make homeschooling and private education illegal and would eliminate educational freedom in Minnesota. Undoubtedly, the result would be a mass exodus of taxpayers from the state.

I encourage you to reject this proposed amendment to the Minnesota Constitution.