

Hello!

My name is Laura Wegener. I am a wife, homeschool mom of six years, and full-time employee for a local organization. I am busy, as are you, which is why I want to voice my opposition to HF1269.

Homeschoolers consistently show that they have a better education than kids in public and even private education; this shows that homeschoolers are doing something right, and I fully believe it is from the personalized education that comes from being taught by a parent. No school could ever replicate that.

I appreciate the flexibility that MN currently has with its requirements for homeschooling, and I would venture to say that many school leaders also appreciate the current flexibility. Reporting test scores will add undue burden to parents and to school liaisons. When school liaisons or government officials see private test scores, they see numbers, but when homeschool parents see test scores, they see what to teach their children next. Government and school officials cannot do what parents can do, so I oppose adding additional government requirements or intervention. It is unnecessary.

Adding paperwork to school liaisons or to parents will not help us do our job better. In addition, this reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which paved the way to simpler reporting requirements for MN homeschoolers. My understanding is at that time, school districts also concluded that they didn't want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers. I see no good reason why this should or would change.

Thank you for your time.

Laura Wegener

Written Testimony Opposing HF1269 and SF1311

Homeschool Freedom In Minnesota

02/06/2023

Good morning,

My name is Ken Duffy. I am a Minnesota resident that recently learned of HF1269 and Senate version SF1311. We are a homeschool family that has enjoyed taking up our responsibility and freedom to educate our children. The role of parents educating our children is ordained by God and any infringement on this instruction by God is a violation of religious freedom and practice in the State of Minnesota. This is up to and including the proposed legislation articulated in HF1269 and SF1311.

My family and I are petitioning you to OPPOSE HF1269 because it seeks to add a new requirement of reporting for homeschoolers:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

During a time in history when the national trend was less reporting for homeschoolers, rather than more, this would be regression for Minnesota homeschool freedoms. The 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill put forth simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers, which provided relief for their families and their districts. At that same time, school districts also concluded that *they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers*.

Some questions I would like answered in regards to this proposed addition are:

1. Is there evidence to suggest that a change in reporting requirements for homeschoolers is necessary or useful?
2. Who would get to see the test results and what would the data contained in the report be used for?

I am very concerned that government officials and/or agents would be privy to test results, which would be an **unconstitutional infringement of our privacy rights and religious freedoms**.

Typically, homeschooled children perform better than their public schooled peers. I am concerned that test results from homeschoolers will be used to inflate the overall scores that gauge how well schools in Minnesota are doing. It is my opinion that Minnesota schools are NOT doing a good job for their students, which is one of the lesser reasons why we decided to

home educate. Primarily, however, this is an ordained role God has given me and my spouse. God's law is above all laws of men.

Parents are given the right to decide how their children are educated. As a home educating family, we take our responsibility to our child's learning seriously. The government and the school districts have no right to the instruction and abilities of my children. They are *my* children.

Again, please OPPOSE HF1269.

Thank you for your time and service,

Kenneth T. Duffy, Jr.
ken@kenduffy.net
Silver Bay, MN 55614

Sent electronically to: wilson.lee@house.mn.gov, rep.roger.skraba@house.mn.gov, sen.grant.hauschild@senate.mn.gov, Pete Stauber (web form), Amy Klobuchar (web form), tina.smith@mail.house.gov, rep.laurie.pryor@house.mn.gov, rep.josiah.hill@house.mn.gov, rep.peggy.bennett@house.mn.gov, rep.ben.bakeberg@house.mn.gov, rep.kaela.berg@house.mn.gov, rep.sandra.feist@house.mn.gov, rep.cedrick.frazier@house.mn.gov, rep.heather.keeler@house.mn.gov, rep.krista.knudsen@house.mn.gov, rep.liz.lee@house.mn.gov, rep.patricia.mueller@house.mn.gov, rep.dean.urdahl@house.mn.gov, rep.cheryl.youakim@house.mn.gov.

Kenneth T. Duffy, Jr.

Date: 02/06/2023

Signed: _____



Name: _____

Kenneth T. Duffy, Jr.

Good morning,

I have become aware that the Education Policy committee will be meeting tomorrow afternoon, February 7, 2023 to discuss HF 1269 and SF 1311, a proposal to mandate that homeschool parents submit their annual standardized testing scores.

We as homeschool parents are VERY opposed to this proposal. It would be an unnecessary and intrusive requirement for homeschoolers, and would take MN backwards in history regarding homeschooling requirements. Only 6 states in the US still require standardized testing for homeschoolers. This requirement has gone the way of the dinosaur, and yet MN wants to increase the requirements. As a state known for it's progressiveness in so many areas, including education, do we really want this for MN? I hope you will realize that the answer is a resounding NO!

State standards do not apply to any school other than public schools. They do not apply to private schools, and should NOT apply to homeschools either. Even public school parents have the right to opt out of standardized testing for their child. Why should our rights be any different than what has already been established under the law for non-public schools and public school parents?

Why is it unnecessary? Homeschool parents across the board place a VERY high value on education. We take our responsibilities extremely seriously. Our family is no different. I have a masters degree, and my husband has two degrees. And if you look at study after study, homeschool students are highly successful. Colleges seek out homeschool students. I just recently spoke with someone in admissions in our local community college who spoke about this again. She noted that homeschool students typically have better study skills, have learned better time management, and are educationally more prepared than their peers. So, requiring submitting test scores is only going to add undue burden to homeschool families and the school districts which will have to process more paperwork and communications. This is unnecessary government oversight in something that has NEVER proven to need oversight.

Why is it intrusive? As a parent, my right to choose how I educate my child has been established. Even though it is not required of me, I still review state standards each school year to review what I need and want to include in my teaching. Hundreds of hours are spent pouring over curriculum options and lesson planning. However, how, what and when I teach that is up to me, as their teacher. My daughter has ADHD. She is very smart, but does not learn in traditional ways. Requiring submission of test scores would require that I teach to the test, and that would not be beneficial to her at all. In fact, it would harm her education, and she would learn less. Furthermore, a standardized test is only a snap shot in time, and in so many cases, only reflects on how well a student has memorized information and how good of a test taker they are-neither of which reflect true learning, absorption or mastery of content. Teaching to a test also does not instill a love of learning in a child. It does cause undo stress, and often times poor self-esteem, when a child feels that they don't measure up. And while I absolutely test every year, as required by law, I use those test scores for my benefit-to see where we need to go back and review, and what could be taught differently, etc. It is used as a learning tool, not a litmus test. A requirement to submit standardized test scores would only lead to more intrusion into our personal education choices including curriculum, how it is taught, and when it is taught. For all of these reasons, I implore you-VOTE NOTE on this proposal!

Sincerely,
Heather Brown
1013 Acacia Ave
Proctor, MN 55810

(218) 590-0436

To Whom It May Concern,

Regarding HF1269, I went to and graduated from public school, myself. I am currently a homeschooling mom and have been for 7 years. I do hire a consultant who was a Montessori school teacher and he was an intricate component to starting MACHE, the largest homeschool organization in Minnesota and in the 1987 legislation to make homeschool education legal. We are not concerned with not meeting testing requirements but I have heard from school Superintendents and Administrators that they do not want the extra burden of additional paperwork from homeschoolers.

This was already dealt with back in 2011 with the Homeschool Mandate Reduction Act. At that time, it was found that Superintendents of the school districts and school Administrators did not want the burden of handling extra paper work that they don't need. Homeschooling families are already required to keep records of the actual test scores and would have them available, if need be, so there is no need for Superintendent and Administrators to be extra burdened by needing to house these same records. We are not concerned with meeting the test scores, it's that neither the families, nor the schools want the extra burden of unnecessary paperwork. The schools have enough to do already, don't burden them more than they need to be. They already voiced that they neither need nor want this information sent to them. Do not require them to use their valuable resources on double record keeping. Please amend HF1269 to remove proposed article 1.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lori and Joe Jacobs

Minnetonka, Mn

February 6, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing in opposition to the proposed test reporting requirement before the Committee. Requiring test scores to be submitted to public schools will only place more paperwork burden on public schools that are currently struggling to keep up. This will take needed resources away from public school students. The wording is also against the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction Bill. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Anthony and Jaimie Ladner

A few years ago, when Minnesota's education law was being discussed, it was decided that there was a need to cut down on unnecessary paperwork that put an undue burden on school districts and homeschools. At that time the law was changed to include less paperwork for our homeschools and school districts, while still providing oversight. The changes have worked well since the newest amendments to Minnesota's education law went into effect. There's no good reason to add extra, unnecessary burdens to Minnesota homeschools and school districts.

Another problem with the proposed changes is that it necessitates a third party become involved in our homeschool reporting. This has the potential to cause many problems for homeschools and districts. For example, I physically bring my homeschool reporting form to the district office once a year, or I send it through the mail with a return receipt. That way I know the district has received my paperwork by the deadline each year. This newest provision requires a third party, namely a testing facility, to send the school district sensitive information about our students. Putting such a task in the hands of a third party increases the chances that the information will go to the wrong party or never reach the district at all, due to no failure on the homeschool or district's part. It will take further time and effort away from the job of educating children to find lost or misdirected test score results. It also makes sensitive student information vulnerable.

There's no evidence to suggest that turning in, yet another form, to the school district will be of any benefit to homeschool children's education. There are already provisions in the law that require parents to get their children further assessment if they fall below a certain point. Homeschool children generally score well on standardized tests, so the proposed changes would not help the majority of homeschooled children.

For those who find their children fall below the acceptable threshold, turning in their test results has no benefit either. The parents are still legally required to get their children further assessment, not the district. These children tend to have handicaps or disabilities, so this may put additional pressure on homeschool families already dealing with great challenges, by opening the door for outside intrusion by the school districts into their educational choices (IEP).

Homeschools and private schools are considered independent schools. If there's a valid suspicion of wrongdoing the current law allows the superintendent to investigate and ask for records, but otherwise those records are private. Homeschool parents want their children to do well and get an excellent education, that's why they sacrifice to homeschool them. They don't need the extra burden of more paperwork on top of the sacrifices they already make. They also shouldn't have to provide private records every year, without valid suspicion of wrongdoing.

The school districts are already facing educational decline as a result of the last few years. To add extra work, from a group that they have very little influence or input into, is misguided and will take precious resources from where it's needed most.

In summary, I ask that the proposed changes to Minnesota homeschool law be withdrawn and that you allow school districts and homeschools focus on the task of educating children, not unnecessary paper work and intrusion.

From: Erin Anderson <erin.raawe@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, February 5, 2023 9:12 PM
To: Jeff Witte <Rep.Jeff.Witte@house.mn.gov>;
Pat Garofalo <Rep.Pat.Garofalo@house.mn.gov>;
Wilson Lee <Wilson.Lee@house.mn.gov>
Subject: Oppose changes to homeschooling guidelines

Hello,

We are a Minnesota homeschool family on the brink of leaving this state due to the constant over reach the last few years, rising crime, and failing public school system. The proposed changes to "non public" school requirements are an over reach. Public schools are failing our kids, hence the move away from the system for our family. Please do not support the following changes:

See lines 3.6-3.12

HE1269

https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF1269&version=0&session=ls93&session_year=2023&session_number=0
SF1311

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=SF1311&=2023&ssn=0&b=senate>

Erin Anderson

To whom it may concern,

As a homeschool parent, a mother, and a former public school student, I have to stand strongly opposed to HF1269. Through the journey of becoming a homeschool parent, I have learned many things about teaching and learning styles and how each of my children learns differently. What I have also learned is that NO ONE is more invested in the success and the future of my children than I am. As a teacher I work longer, harder, and more attentively for EACH of my kids than any public school teacher could. This isn't easy or fun at times, but it IS worth the hard work I put into it.

One part of the homeschool process I have never appreciated is the paperwork I am required to babysit. It often does not reflect the genuine work put in by either myself or my children. The end of the year assessments, though interesting, are more for me as a teacher to better understand where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and I find they are often missing the overall picture. We do them. As parents we do them to comply with the demands made of us so that we may remain at the forefront of our children's education.

When I buy a new curriculum for my child, thinking it will further their ability to learn, retain, and grow, I am glad for the chance that it may do just that. When I find a new extracurricular class option that lets them see a certain subject or topic in a more hands-on way, I am happy they have the opportunity. And when I take the time to immerse them in history or science through a field trip or event, I feel blessed for the experience to be there.

Never once have I thought to myself that sending paperwork and test scores and heaping more record-keeping, secretarial work on a homeschool parent would help their child's education. Never once have I felt blessed or overjoyed at the chance to hand in more schedules and lists to someone who has no real understanding of the time, effort, or hours put into that work by either myself or my children. It is time and effort spent on paperwork that has no value TO my child's education, but instead takes time AWAY from my child's education. In short, while I am filing paperwork, writing syllabuses, filling in boxes on a form, babysitting schedules for handing in what has become 'my homework' to the school district, and stressing over whether I sent in all my letters or tests and even if they were received properly, I am losing time I could have been spending TEACHING them.

As an institution whose focus is on the education of the younger generation, hindering the educators with more and more paperwork and oversight does not improve the situation. Homeschools encompass a wide array of teaching curriculums, styles, schedules, and practices that cannot be correlated or quantified to each other or to a standardized format. It is the unique fruition of each child and family using the best tools they can for each learning experience. This new bill seems to demand that parents not only explain those choices to a system rooted in 'one mode of teaching,' but also sets them up to have to defend it if necessary to others who may know very little about either the curriculum or the student. It does not improve homeschooling for the teacher, certainly not for the child. So if it does not perform this most basic function, exactly who is the bill being passed for?

Crystal Kerian
Rochester, MN
Homeschool mother of 5 since 2014

To All Whom Serve The People,

We are a a homeschool family in Minnesota that is concerned about the proposal of HF1269. We feel strongly that parents are best capable of knowing which avenues of education serve best each individual child, and therefore ought to have both the responsibility and freedom to accommodate such education. The current reporting requirements have served us well and have kept our time and efforts focused on educating our children in freedom of knowing what is needed for each individual child. We are concerned that more requirements will be an unwarranted burden on not only busy homeschooling parents and students, but also on districts and the state.

Thank you,

Gabrielle Britton and family

We are asking you to OPPOSE HF1269 because it seeks to add a new requirement of reporting for homeschoolers

Homeschoolers already are required to check in with the school district if test scores fall below 30%.

My school district is so inundated with new homeschoolers it is putting a strain on their resources/services. I can't imagine adding this burden to the district.

At a time when the national trend is LESS reporting for homeschoolers, rather than more, this would be a step backward for Minnesota homeschool freedoms. The 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill put forth simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers, which was a relief for their families, but also for their districts. At that time, the school districts also concluded that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers.

Again, please OPPOSE HF1269.

Ben Helgeson

February 6, 2023

TO: Members of the Minnesota House Education Policy Committee

FROM: Kelly Kayser

RE: HF1269 and companion SF1311

I am writing in ***opposition*** to the addition of the following language to **Sec. 2**, Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120A.24, subdivision 1 as it pertains to the annual a letter of intent to continue to provide instruction:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

This additional language will unnecessarily create more paperwork for both parents and school administrators; furthermore, there is no credible evidence to suggest that requiring the additional information is necessary or useful.

Over time, Minnesota homeschool families have demonstrated their commitment to educating their children and following the requirements already in place. In fact, the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill recognized that commitment; thus, further regulatory reporting requirements would be contrary to the results of that bill and onerous to all involved.

There is no benefit to be gained from sending annual test scores to the district office because no one is more committed to homeschool students’ academic success than their parents.

Again, I urge you to vote against the proposed language.

To Members of the Minnesota House Education Policy Committee:

Testimony in opposition of HF1269

I am writing to you to express my family's opposition to HF1269. We are a homeschooling family with three children. We are opposed to the change that would require homeschooling families to submit our students' standardized test scores.

This change would be burdensome to parents and local school districts by requiring unnecessary extra paperwork to be prepared and submitted on a yearly basis. Under the current law, MN homeschool families are already evaluating our own children's test scores. The intended outcome of this bill is unclear to me. What is this data going to be used for and who will be authorized to see it?

Thank you for your time and service to our communities.

Most Sincerely,
Colleen Grant
Eden Prairie, MN

Re: HF1269

Dear Minnesota House Education Policy Committee,

We are writing as concerned Homeschool parents regarding the additional reporting requirement in HF1269 of submitting our annual assessment scores. The specific new language is as follows:

3.5 (1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.

This additional reporting requirement would infringe on our rights as a homeschooling family and is an over-reach of government.

There is no valid justification or evidence suggesting that a change in the current reporting requirement is needed or would be useful to improve the educational instruction of our homeschooled children. Furthermore, this new requirement would infringe upon our rights since homeschools are considered independent institutions, making our records private.

Minnesota homeschool families know the law, complete the required yearly assessment and maintain the records—as required by law. If there is ever a need to view our testing records, the law also allows for investigation and submission of records. There is no evidence that additional oversight or regulations are warranted.

The addition of this reporting requirement places an undue burden on homeschool families and all school districts across Minnesota. Have school districts requested to manage this additional paperwork? More regulation does not result in better education of our homeschoolers.

Please remove this new requirement within HF1269.

Sincerely,

Brian and Erin Bell

Dear House Education Policy committee,

Thank you for all your efforts and care to ensure the children of MN have a quality education!

It has been brought to my attention via HF1269 that your committee is attempting to change our current homeschool law to require our annual testing reports to be submitted to the school district, and extra unnecessary regulations. This concerns me and I respectfully plead with you to drop HF1269 changes to homeschool law, and instead, seek to find ways to give more freedom for parents to direct the education of their children in ways they know is best.

Across the country and over the past 30 some years, homeschooling has shown to thrive best with less regulation, and homeschooled students learn more robustly in an education tailored just for them, on a personal level, by parents who love them, and care for and know them better than the state does or even school districts or writers of curriculum. A cookie cutter education, or one size fits all, is increasingly revealing to be very ineffective in educating myriads of diverse children coming from all backgrounds of economics, faiths, and life perspectives. When children are given the opportunity to learn at their own pace, with methods the parents know works best for them, they then succeed as individuals and grow up to be responsible adults who genuinely care about others. They also are fully engaged in life and learning because they have been able to pursue their God given talents and interests, and find ways to succeed best in life financially and socially, which actually benefits society in the most optimal way.

I have observed this in many cases and learned this experientially.

My name is Elizabeth. I am a resident in the Milaca, MN Area the past several years, after having lived most of my life in Minneapolis. I graduated 4th in my 1996 class of 250 students in Edison High School. I also received a Bachelor's Degree from the University of MN in Recreation, Parks, and Leisure Studies, specifying in Outdoor Recreation and Education. I finished my internship at Richardson Nature Center, and was immediately hired as an interpretive Naturalist for Three Rivers Park District, where I assisted, taught, and led Nature Education for children for 3 years until the birth of my first daughter. I then became a full-time mom, started my own home nature camp for eager children, and am now currently raising and homeschooling my 5 children, while my husband has his own business washing windows.

I have always loved working with children, and finding creative ways to help them learn and enjoy learning. My husband really struggled throughout school and still currently has learning challenges; however, he is an amazingly hard worker and very devoted to his family. The experience with my husband has helped me develop compassion for our children, and before we were even married, I had planned to homeschool, believing our children would need a unique teaching approach tailored exactly to their diverse ways of learning, in order to help them succeed educationally and thrive in life. I was correct!

I am giving my kids a whole life education, hands on, real and absorbable, at a pace that helps them thrive and really learn and love learning. I have a wholly unique perspective on education that is helping them want to learn, relate learning to everyday experiences, and doesn't overwhelm them. Statistics and psychology show that a child only remembers about 10% of what they learn unless it is connected with an emotion (i.e. hands on or real-life experience or application). I cannot conscience wasting 90% of my children's childhood by packing information into their brains that they won't retain. I am taking them at a pace that enables them to fully grasp and absorb what they are learning, to love learning and life, and care for others. I need that freedom! They are thriving so well, and I need to be able to continue nurturing their minds and hearts and physical learning, in the ways that I have worked so hard to discover and perfect to their optimal educational benefit, without the state impeding on this with excessive and unnecessary regulations.

So please do not continue to bring HF1269 changes into law, and instead, trust that Minnesota homeschooling parents are doing the best job possible educating their children, and if left alone, their children will grow up to benefit the citizens of Minnesota far better than any State regulation would consider!

I would love to testify at the hearing tomorrow, but I have some urgent dental needs to attend to at a nearby dentist for my children and am not sure I could make it in time. Until then, Thanks for all your incredible efforts to bless our children!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Snyder

Interpretive Naturalist, Northern Adventures Discovery Cabin

763-229-3736

Liz4Him@hotmail.com

65 Feb 2023

I am writing to oppose the section of bill HF1269 which would alter the reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers by requiring "a copy of the test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year" to be sent to the school district. As a homeschooling parent of four I'm opposed to this needless change in MN homeschooled law for the following reasons:

First, the proposed change which would require a homeschooling parent to have annual test scores submitted by the tester to the district is unnecessary and invasive. I am the primary teacher for my children, not the school district. The scores they achieve are for my records and I am already required to provide additional attention to areas where my children may be falling short. This change assumes that the district and thereby the state is the ultimate authority over my child and over my instruction of my child. It is an encroachment on our privacy and on my parental right to oversee the education of my children.

Second, there is no evidence that the proposed change is even necessary. Homeschooled children in MN perform on average at least as well and usually better than their public schooled peers. Further, I am already required to maintain my child's test scores as part of their educational records. Why does the district need the scores of a resident who is not even a student of theirs? This is a pointless change that simply creates more work for both the district and the parent.

Which brings me to point number three. When current MN homeschool law was passed the school districts even testified that they did not desire the burden of tracking and maintaining records of test scores for children who were not their students. This proposed change makes more work for districts already struggling to recover and help children in public schools recover from the COVID era slump in education. They simply don't need another task to accomplish.

Fourth, the proposed change also creates another undue burden for both homeschool testers and MN homeschool families which in the end will make it harder to homeschool. Many testers test children from all over the state and the proposed change would now require them (not even the parent!) to submit the scores to each individual district. That seems almost like intentionally cutting the parent, who is the educator here, out of the loop entirely. How many testers will desire to maintain their services when they now have to send hundreds of reports to hundreds of districts? This will limit the availability of quality testing choices.

Fifth, the proposed change creates undue stresses and requirements for homeschooling parents with no evidence that such a change is even necessary. This adds additional paperwork to the reporting process which creates the added potential for errors. It also, in some cases, removes required paperwork from the control of the parent. I would now be required to have someone else submit paperwork for my child on time. Should the tester make a mistake, it is the parent who will be held responsible for not meeting the reporting requirements which can cause action to be taken by the state. This creates an unacceptable and unnecessary strain for homeschool parents. What will happen is that instead of choosing a more academically rigorous test to really challenge my children and see what they can achieve (but which I need a trained tester to administer), I will instead choose the simplest test that I can administer myself (thereby not relying on another to help me meet reporting requirements and deadlines). All this change will do is limit testing options and the usefulness of the testing.

Minnesota homeschool families have been excelling under the current homeschool law. As the law stands, it provides clear guidelines to what is required of a parent. It even stipulates what a parent must do if a student fails to meet standards. It ought to be the part of the State of Minnesota to assume homeschoolers are meeting those requirements, until such a time as they have evidence someone is not. At that point they can demand the records. This new proposed language essentially is the State assuming they have a right to the records of students who are not in public schools even when there is no evidence of wrongdoing. It is an unnecessary, invasive change and creates more burdens for both public education administrators and for homeschool educators. If adopted, this would be a step backward in MN homeschool law.

Please take a stand against this change in wording to the Minnesota homeschool reporting requirements and thereby allow homeschooling families to continue to focus on excellence in teaching.
Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Mary Petersen



Good morning,

I am asking you to vote no to the HF1269 bill proposing greater government control of homeschooling in MN.

The government does not need to know or regulate what curriculum is used to homeschool, nor should they need to access my children's annual test scores, which this bill is proposing. This adds an unnecessary burden to homeschoolers and the public school district to maintain these records and also raises the question of what the data would be used for.

Part of the beauty of homeschool is the ability to tailor education to meet the specific needs of each student in an organic and supportive setting. Research has shown children who homeschool often outperform their peers and more regulation does NOT improve education outcomes. In a nationwide study by Brian Ray, a comparison of homeschool student performance on standardized tests showed the average composite percentile score on testing was 86 for homeschool students compared to the national percentile mean of 50 (Ray, 2010).

This same article evaluated whether additional state regulations was associated with improved student outcomes. "High" government regulation in a state was defined as, "the state requiring homeschool parents to send to the state notification of homeschooling or achievement test scores and/or evaluation by a professional and, in addition, having other requirements (e.g. curriculum approval by the state, teacher qualifications of parents, or home visits by state officials" (Ray, 2010). They noted, "no significant relationship between degree of state regulation of homeschooling and test scores" (Ray, 2010).

I have a master's degree and work as an SLP. I understand the value of data for observing strengths and weakness and adjusting to support my clients. I take the same approach for my homeschooling. However, that is not the role of the government for my children.

Please do your part to vote no to the HF1269 bill and uphold laws that support parents who choose homeschool to provide rich learning environments for their children to flourish, without hindrances and burdens that have no proven value for improving student outcomes.

Sincerely,

Michelle Wall

Ray, Brian. (2010). Academic achievement and demographic traits of homeschool students: A nationwide study. *Academic Leadership* 8 (1).

Dear Mr. Wilson Lee,

It has come to my attention that the Minnesota legislature is considering HF1269, a bill which would require standardized test scores of homeschool students be submitted by the test provider to the school district. I would like to voice my opposition to this bill, both as a former homeschool student as well as currently homeschooling parent.

I was homeschooled for twelve years in Minneapolis under a test score submission requirement similar to the one currently recommended in this bill. This policy did little to further my education. Rather, it created much additional work for my parents to get paperwork properly submitted to our school district by certain deadlines. Furthermore, we had to complete these tests within a certain timeframe (usually in April) which generally interrupted our school year.

Each year the outcome of our standardized tests was largely the same: I scored significantly higher than my public school peers in every subject, so much so that my parents never regarded the scores as an accurate measure of our academic success. The scores only affirmed to my parents that they had made the right decision when they decided to homeschool. The effectiveness of our homeschool education was later confirmed by my achievement of a high score on the ACT and my successful completion of a bachelor's degree at a private liberal arts college.

As I now homeschool my own four children, I can honestly tell you that submission of test scores to the school district will do nothing to increase the seriousness of my commitment to providing my students with a quality and comprehensive education. Every year we complete a standardized test as dictated by current state requirements, and we use those results to ensure that there are no gaps in our home education. Having our district view these test results would add nothing to our own critical review and personal oversight of our children's home education. I homeschool *because* I value thorough understanding and high achievement in education, not because I choose the path of least homework resistance.

I ask that you oppose HF1269 because it would reintroduce burdensome and needless paperwork back into the educational process for both homeschool families and school district offices. This paperwork does not affect educational outcomes in any way. Should this law pass, I predict the collected test scores will only continue to show that when parents take ownership of their children's education, when students are presented with material in a manner tailored to their educational style and needs, superior learning happens.

Sincerely,
Sarah House
11660 Evergreen St NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55448

February 6, 2023

Wilson Lee

Minnesota House Education Committee

St Paul, Minnesota

RE: Concerns with HF 1269

Dear Mr. Lee

In response to the test reporting requirements found in HF 1269:

This is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction Bill. This is a burden requiring homeschoolers and school districts unnecessary paperwork. It is also providing government officials or other agents with unconstitutional authority to view private data. Please do not support in consideration of both homeschoolers and school districts.

Sincerely,

Jennifer and John Tramm

Ghent, Minnesota

Hello committee members,

I am writing because I strongly oppose the HF 1269 bill. I am an active member of my community, I always exercise my civic duty to vote , I graduated college with a 4.0. I am also a homeschool graduate. I was homeschooled k-12. Now I myself am a homeschool mother who has been homeschooling her children for the last 9 years.

The language in HF 1269 says "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation" must be provided.

It also says-

"evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed" must be submitted. This is completely contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction.

I have nothing to hide, my children have always scored well on their tests, I believe in the curriculum I use and my ability to instruct my children.

However, the fact that this allows school districts to impose their standards in my homeschool does create problem for me.

During the height of the pandemic when parents had no choice but to homeschool, parents were called hero's, innovative, capable of educating their own children. There were specials on tv shows such as Good morning America that showcased all the different ways parents could interact with their kids and ways children could learn outside of specific textbooks. All things that "pre-Covid homeschoolers " have already known and implemented.

Suggesting that our homeschools will need to be defined by the public school system's definitions will greatly impinge upon our freedom to teach our children with a broad range of experiences , curriculum and techniques. It is also impossible to score on a test, life skills, experiences, and love of learning. I love and care about the welfare of my children with a fierceness that no branch of government could ever compare to. We as parents have the right to choose how our children our educated. Please don't restrict that. Oppose SH 1269

Sincerely ,

Mara Kirckof

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express that I would like to testify in opposition of HF 1269. There is no good reason to add to the paperwork burden placed on parents and school administrators. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful.

There is a strong national trend to reduce or eliminate mandatory testing for homeschoolers. As of today, only a handful of states—6—require families to submit an annual report of assessment results. HF 1269 is trying to turn the clock back to a time when the homeschool model of education was treated with suspicion. Homeschoolers in study after study demonstrate excellent academic results. This suspicion is not justified.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Kristin Whatton

February 6, 2023

Carolyn Counihan
11488 76th Court NE
Otsego, MN 55301

Greetings to the House Education Policy Committee,

I am submitting this written testimony as a home educator in Wright County in the ISD 728 School District. My testimony is in regards to the proposed test reporting requirements in HF1269 and SF1311.

I strongly oppose this language about new test reporting requirements that would impact negatively home educators and home educated children and adolescents:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

As a home educator of three children, I strongly oppose this proposed language. Specifically, I am concerned with the additional reporting requirement of including “a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year.” I am not clear why this onerous new requirement is being reintroduced at this time. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful. This reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which paved the way to simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers. At that time, the school districts also concluded that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers - nor do homeschoolers need or want the additional paperwork.

Please consider these points:

**Studies have shown that high regulation of homeschoolers does NOT increase test scores.

**Homeschooled students are scoring about 30 points higher on standardized tests than their public school counterparts.

**It is going to cost school districts lots of money to hire someone to keep track of all of this paperwork. Some districts have over 1,000 homeschooled students.

**There is no purpose in the state having these scores since the state has no oversight or control of homeschooled students curricula, pace, grade level, etc. They would not have (as the law currently stands) any power to use these scores for anything positive.

This would be a significant step backward for homeschooling freedom in Minnesota. It would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on Minnesota homeschoolers and districts. Plus, it could provide government officials or other agents with the unconstitutional authority to see private data. Parents should be the ones who decide how their children are educated.

Thank you for considering my points of opposition to passing this bill.

Kind regards,

Carolyn Counihan

I am writing in opposition to HF1269. I have been a homeschool parent in Minnesota for more than 15 years, lead homeschool coops and now substitute teach in a private school. The requirements proposed in HF1269 are intrusive and place an unnecessary burden on parent educators and school districts.

As home educators, we alone are responsible for our children's education. We register with the district. We do the planning. We purchased the materials. We monitor our children's progress. We intervene when they're needing assistance. For the most part, school district officials are not involved in our children's education. Why is it necessary to provide more information to the school district? There is no evidence that providing scores to the school district will improve education in any way. If scores are provided to school districts, what's will the school district do with the test scores? Leaving that decision up to each individual school district puts many law abiding families at risk of having their rights violated by overzealous school district officials.

Minnesota provides more support and resources for homeschool families than most states. We are supported by experienced educators in co-ops, churches, the Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators, the Minnesota Homeschoolers Alliance, the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, Heppner's Legacy supportive services, and local and social media support groups. Many of us also live in supportive and incredible school districts who willingly work with us. Minnesota has a long history of strong, successful public, private and homeschool education.

School districts are working hard to support the students that they see every day. Teachers are challenged with the social, emotional, and educational support of students both in person and online. We do an injustice to our education system by forcing them to also try to support students they don't see every day, students that are being educated by someone else. Requiring schools to process test scores for students they don't educate will be expensive and burdensome.

Finally, there is no indication that home education in Minnesota needs any kind of improvement. Statics from the Home School Legal Defense Association and multiple other sources consistently show homeschool students score higher than public school students on standardized testing, have higher graduation rates and experience greater success in college then public school students. There's simply is no reason for any changes at this time.

For all of these reasons, I am asking you to vote no on this measure.

Thank you.
Jacqueline Glenn

725 6th St NW,
Elk River, MN 55330
320-428-9195

6 February 2023

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to you about bill HF1269 that will be introduced into the MN House on Monday and Tuesday.

My family became an accidental homeschool family when their school shut down during COVID. I'll spare you many details and anecdotes, but what you should know is that my children are thriving. They are happy, social children who no longer suffer from things like anxiety or falling behind in subjects since they left school. I know homeschool is not for every family, but for ours, it has been an unintended blessing.

This bill would require homeschool families to submit test scores to the state. Homeschools are considered independent schools and therefore our records are private. Unless there is a valid suspicion or evidence of wrongdoing. At which time the law already requires the commissioner to investigate and ask for the records. Therefore, it is hard to see why the government would want or need these records if there is no evidence of wrongdoing. If they are allowed to do this, then they will be allowed to require what test we take. And if they are allowed to require the test, they will then be allowed to require the curriculum.

The reason we homeschool is because our children have unique educational needs that we, as their parents, know best how to meet. My children always have wonderful test scores, so that is not my concern. Studies have clearly shown that more regulations do NOT result in better education of homeschoolers. If it's not the welfare of the children, or the quality of the education that this bill is able to address, then we're left with the concern of plain government overreach.

Please oppose this bill and continue to give homeschool families the freedom to give our own children a beautiful and meaningful education, tailor made for the unique and special people they are.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kristin J. Cpin
Duluth, MN

To the MN House of Representatives:

I am writing to you today as a teacher and homeschooling mother of 7. Although I received dual Bachelor's of Education degrees from Concordia University, Saint Paul in December 2011, I chose to stay home, immediately after my degree completion, to raise and provide individualized education for my children.

My oldest child, now 11, has dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia. Because of her struggles with reading, writing, and math, the initial years of formal education would have shown her as behind grade level. We spent an entire year focused on reading and an entire year focused on math. Now, in what would be considered her 5th grade year, her tests show above level scores.

Submitting her scores would not have been and would not be efficacious. We do not receive funding or intervention from our district. We do not *want* that aid or oversight. I know my children. I know their learning differences. I am the one poised to best intervene and assist my children in their educational goals.

The language of this bill, particularly "evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed," would be stripping homeschoolers of autonomy and our parental rights to educate our children as we see fit. There is no good reason to add to the paperwork burden placed on parents and school administrators. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful.

I urge you to keep homeschooling in the home, at the discretion of parents, and not expand to additional district oversight. Simply put, education and child formation should happen in the home and not be a compulsion of the state.

Respectfully,

Maddie Marshall
26103 Verdin St NW
Isanti, MN 55040
660-229-3309

Geoffrey and Christina Davies

26530 Quinlan Ave
Lindstrom, MN 55045
daviesinuk@gmail.com

5th February 2023

Re: Testimony in Opposition to HF 1269

To Whom It May Concern,

We have already contacted the authors and sponsors of this bill and now we are writing to **strongly oppose HF1269** as it is brought before this hearing.

We oppose the language of this bill because:

- We are concerned with the additional reporting requirement of including "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year." Why would this requirement even be considered?
- There is NO credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful.
- Do you remember the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction Bill? This paved the way for simpler reporting requirements AND the school districts had decided that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers. THIS reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which paved the way to simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers.
- This would be A SIGNIFICANT STEP BACKWARDS for homeschooling freedom in Minnesota. It would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on Minnesota homeschoolers and districts.
- Additionally, there is a strong national trend to reduce or eliminate mandatory testing for homeschoolers. As of today, only a handful of states—6—require families to submit an annual report of assessment results.

Why should Minnesota go back to the dark ages when the homeschool model of education was treated with suspicion. Homeschoolers IN STUDY AFTER STUDY demonstrate excellent academic results. This suspicion is NOT justified. Plus, it has the potential to provide government officials or other agents with the unconstitutional authority to see private data. Parents should be the ones who decide how their children are educated.

Please reject this proposed bill.

Sincerely,
Geoffrey and Christina Davies

Members of the Education Committee,

It is an honor to write to you today in opposition to HF 1269. My name is Karin Miller. I am a wife, mother, English Teacher, and Home Educator of 19 years to our six children.

Although there are many concerning aspects of this 110 page bill, my primary concern is the new requirement that **homeschoolers** must **submit their children's test scores** in their yearly letter of intent to the superintendent. (3.6-3:12).

Seventy eight percent of peer-reviewed studies on academic achievement demonstrate that homeschooled students perform statistically better than those in traditional schools. Homeschooled students typically score 15-30% higher than public school students on standardized academic achievement exams.

[Homeschooling: The Research, Scholarly articles, studies, facts, research \(nheri.org\)](http://nheri.org)

The degree of state regulation is NOT related to homeschooled children's academic achievement. Therefore, there is NO justification for homeschoolers being required to submit their student's test scores to the superintendent.

Logistical concerns related to this requirement are:

1. This will place an administrative burden on test providers and standardized test companies to supply student's scores to the superintendent.
2. This will place an administrative burden on superintendents to collect and maintain score records.
3. Most importantly: What will be done with our student's scores? As Homeschool Parents, we are very concerned that this might lead to further requirements or restrictions of our homeschool freedoms.
4. I am also VERY concerned with the extremely vague wording in 3.10-3.11: "evidence that ANY PROTOCOLS agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed." What kind of protocols is this referring to? Are these protocols put into place by the superintendent's discretion, or is it in collaboration with the parents? The terminology "ANY" protocols seems to give license to superintendents to potentially be able to draft whatever additional protocols they'd like to require. Lines 3.10-3.11 is a dangerous "blank check" that we cannot afford to write into state statute.

Even though most homeschool students outperform their public schooled peers, some do struggle. Trust me, as a Home Educator of 19 years to my 6 children, one of whom is severely dyslexic, I have lived and witnessed first-hand the dedication of homeschool parents to persist in trying different curriculum styles and learning methods until we find what uniquely works for each child. No homeschooled child is EVER left behind, and we do not need the State looking over our shoulders.

Of the myriad of topics this bill covers, a secondary item of major concern is that some of these requirements breach the separation of church and state. We must bear in mind the principle that:

The STATE CANNOT DICTATE BELIEF!!!

At one point this bill would prohibit postsecondary institutions from requiring a faith statement or incorporating a student's "creed" or "religious beliefs" as a consideration in the admissions process (19.1-19:11). This statute discriminates against religious institutions and seeks to prohibit what should be the free expression of ones' religion or beliefs.

Yet several other sections of this bill requires the commissioner of education to imbed a very specific system of belief called ethnic studies into the curriculum (40:16-17, 26:28-26:34, 77.24-78.6). Ethnic studies embraces an oppressed vs. oppressor view of race and gender. These ethnic studies would teach institutional racism, which assumes that all our societal institutions, including education, are structured to chronically favor white people and to oppress people of color.

By supposedly purporting to reduce racism, ethnic studies would actually teach our students to become racist. It is a specific form of worldview with Cultural Marxist roots. It *is* a belief – one that these Minnesota state statutes would enforce on every school.

So in the first example, the State is attempting to suppress religious belief. But in the second example, the State is attempting to dictate belief. BOTH of these examples cross the line and violate the separation of church and state.

Our State Statues should NOT seek to silence the true religious beliefs of the people, nor should they seek to coerce or dictate belief in any given ideology. The first violates our first amendment right to freedom of religion. The second violates the establishment clause that the government cannot dictate nor require adherence to any particular ideology or belief.

If time permitted, I could write on several more issues in the 110 page bill, but these were my two most pressing concerns:

1. Homeschooled students do well. There is no justification for the State to require them to submit their test scores. Focus instead on the failing students in your own public systems.
2. The State CANNOT dictate belief. Therefore, you cannot suppress religious belief nor require implementation of the ethnic studies ideology, which is essentially Cultural Marxism applied to race and gender.

I would like to conclude by raising up one final, overarching, serious concern. Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.021, subdivision 3 is amended to ELIMINATE the requirement for the commissioner of education to go through the legislature in order to amend, repeal, or adopt new rules. (5.1-5.7). So essentially this says that no matter what statute currently says

or what changes you pass in this legislative season, the commissioner of education has completely free and untethered power to make whatever changes she wants. This is dangerous and wrong! The authority to dictate statutes that all Minnesotan schools must follow can never be placed in the hands of just one person.

Therefore, if not for this reason alone – plus the other two concerns outlines above – I urge you to vote NO to HF 1269. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Karin Miller

Melissa Corniea
3915 Canter Glen Drive
Eagan, MN 55123

February 7, 2023

Testify to Oppose HF1269

Dear Madam Chairwoman and Committee Members,

My name is Melissa Corniea; I am a 19 year tax-paying resident of Eagan, Minnesota, district 52B. I oppose HF1269 Section 2 and any other sections that propose change to current homeschool law for several reasons and I am hoping you will truly hear and act on what I have to say.

As a taxpayer I want the strongest public schools that we can possibly have. The students we are entrusting to our public schools deserve to graduate ready for the world before them, whether it's the work force, military, vocational and trade schools or college. I want students that will be well adjusted adults, confident, compassionate, educated, life-long learners who can succeed. I want my tax dollars and the additional levies that are imposed by my public school district, ISD 196 to directly impact the students for the best possible outcomes. Unfortunately, the proposed layer of added home school test reporting and providing evidence of protocols followed to the superintendent means that in ISD 196 alone the district staff will have to track process and maintain records for approximately 658 students annually. There are currently 337 families with 658 homeschool students in ISD 196. This additional paperwork, tracking, and records maintenance doesn't come free. It directly impacts the school budgets and as a tax payer it's not where I expect my money to go to fund successful student outcomes.

Secondly, as current law is written, the guardian of any public education student can opt-out their students from taking any or all standardized test. Homeschoolers are discriminated against and are not afforded the same rights surrounding testing. We are legally obligated to test. Since tests seem to be of importance, let's look at the numbers.

Per the Minnesota House Research Department here and the Minnesota Department of Education, for the 2018-2019 school year there were approximately 16,700 homeschool students, and 862,971 public school students enrolled in K-12. That breaks down to approximately 1.9% of Minnesota students as homeschooled. If the goal in changing current homeschool law as outlined in HF1269, Section 2, lines 3.0 through 3.15 is to provide assurance that student success is being met, I want to ask why you care so much about 1.9%? THE MDE has proof that across all 459 public secondary schools in Minnesota, students are NOT succeeding. Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Report Card, says that across the state for 11th graders in 2022, only 36.7% scored with proficiency in math; let that sink in, that means 63.6% of Minnesota 11th graders do not meet proficiency standards in math. This year that's 26,942 Minnesota 11th graders. Where is the care for these students who represent just a fraction of public schooled children not getting the education they deserve and have the test scores to prove it? In many cases, you are all they have!

As a 9 year veteran homeschool mom I want you to understand that there is no one that wants to see my children grow to be successful, productive, compassionate, lifelong learning leaders more than my husband and I. We sacrifice an entire income to make sure that both of our children are not a statistic that falls through the cracks, that gets moved forward in school that is left behind on test day. We follow the laws and enrich our children's education in a custom, life-giving manner that ensures a strong work-ethic and success not just academically, but socially. If the purpose of making the proposed changes to homeschool law is to make home schooling harder, give us more hoops to jump through so that we will give up and put our kids in public school, where currently in Eagan my children would each be worth \$12,624 to the school district. I will not stop fighting to keep my children out of a broken system. The onus is on you to focus your energy to fix public schools for the kids and parents who don't have a choice rather than make homeschooling harder for all Minnesotans.

Our job and our right as parents is to find the best educational fit for our children whether it's our local public school, open enrolled to a public school across town, a private, parochial or other non-public option, online or at home as homeschoolers. Your job is to support that and support our public schools so that they can meet the needs of the children enrolled there in order to provide a stable, bright future for them and our society. Passing this bill as it reads adds layers of bureaucracy to the school districts, some of whom have over 1,000 homeschool students, it removes resources from the kids that need it the most and it is overreach to the rights of law abiding, homeschooling families and future ones as well. I assure you, our homeschool students are succeeding at rates far above our public school ones. Please strike all changes affecting homeschool law from this bill.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to speaking one on one with any of you after this hearing.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to share my opposition to HF1269 and its senate companion SF 1311 which would require homeschooling families in Minnesota to submit test scores annually to their superintendent. I consider this a step backward in preserving and maintaining the rights of families to take responsibility for their own children's education and burdens them as well as the school district with additional unnecessary paperwork. This step is unnecessary and counter productive and will be taking energy and resources away from the actual education of children.

I implore you to oppose this bill as well. There has been nothing that warrants its introduction or evidence which shows that submitting standardized testing scores annually to a school district will be an effective tool in providing proof of a well educated, nourished mind and soul.

More paperwork has never promoted productivity. That is clear in all walks of life.

Thank you for taking this over reach into the rights of parents who have chosen home education seriously.

Deborah Bittner
February 5th, 2023
Foreston, MN

To the Education Policy Committee,

As a home educator, I oppose HF1269. The proposed changes in the bill infringe on the freedom to homeschool in Minnesota and on the rights of parents to educate their children as they see fit without state involvement.

I am concerned that these changes in the bill will open up opportunities for further state regulation and restrictions on homeschoolers that could violate our rights to privacy and freedom.

I implore you to consider my statement. We don't need or want these changes. Parents should be the authority on the education of their own children.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sydney DiMenna

Feb. 6, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a homeschool mom in Minnesota concerned about the proposal of HF1269. I feel strongly that parents should decide how to best educate their children. The current reporting requirements have served us well and have kept our time and efforts focused on educating our children in freedom of knowing what is needed for each individual child.

I am concerned that more requirements will be a burden on not only busy homeschooling parents, but also on districts and the state.

Thank you for serving the people.

Tracy Plemel

Good morning Wilson Lee,

I am asking you to vote **NO** to the **HF1269 bill** proposing greater government control of homeschooling in MN.

The government does not need to know or regulate what curriculum is used to homeschool, nor should they need to access my children's annual test scores, which this bill is proposing. This adds an **unnecessary burden** to homeschoolers and **the public school district** to maintain these records and also raises the question of what the data would be used for.

Part of the beauty of homeschool is the ability to tailor education to meet the specific needs of each student in an organic and supportive setting. Research has shown children who homeschool often outperform their peers and more **regulation does NOT improve education outcomes**. In a nationwide study by Brian Ray, a comparison of homeschool student performance on standardized tests showed the average composite percentile score on testing was 86 for homeschool students compared to the national percentile mean of 50 (Ray, 2010).

This same article evaluated whether additional state regulations was associated with improved student outcomes. "High" government regulation in a state was defined as, "the state requiring homeschool parents to send to the state notification of homeschooling or achievement test scores and/or evaluation by a professional and, in addition, having other requirements (e.g. curriculum approval by the state, teacher qualifications of parents, or home visits by state officials" (Ray, 2010). They noted, "no significant relationship between degree of state regulation of homeschooling and test scores" (Ray, 2010).

I am a registered nurse and I understand the value of data for observing strengths and weakness and adjusting to support my clients. I take the same approach for my homeschooling. However, that is not the role of the government for my children.

Please do your part to **vote NO** to the **HF1269** and uphold laws that support parents who choose homeschool to provide rich learning environments for their children to flourish, without hindrances and burdens that have no proven value for improving student outcomes.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Jensen

Ray, Brian. (2010). Academic achievement and demographic traits of homeschool students: A nationwide study. *Academic Leadership* 8 (1).

Jason and Diane Parmeter
5509 285th Ave NE
North Branch, MN, 55056

Ways and Means Committee

Dear Committee,

I am writing in regards to the bills HF 1269 and SF 1311. I am writing to oppose these two bills. In our Minnesota Statutes 120A:22 Compulsory Instruction Subdivision 1: Parental responsibility. The parent of a child is primarily responsible for assuring the knowledge and skills that are essential for effective citizenship. In the state regulation of Private and Homeschools:

Minnesota defines a nonpublic school as any school, church or religious organization, or homeschool where a student can fulfil compulsory education requirements, that is located in the state and meets the requirements of Title VI of the civil rights act of 1964, *Minn.Stat.Ann.S123B.41,Subd.9*. Accreditation is optional.

Under the United States Constitution , parents have a fundamental right to direct the education of their children. In 1925 the Supreme Court recognized that “liberty” protected by the fourteenth amendment, which includes the right to choose a private education.

I am the parent of my children and it is my fundamental right to homeschool them both. Homeschool is under the class of Private Education. The definition of the word private is: intended for or restricted to the use of a particular person, group or class. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing requirements is necessary or useful. As the parent of my children, I should decide how they are educated.

I strongly oppose these bills.

Sincerely,

Jason and Diane Parmeter

Written testimony for HF 1269:

I am a parent of four homeschooled children. Two of them have graduated and have joined the workforce and are wonderful contributors to society here in Duluth, Minnesota. They both participated in PSEO and had outstanding grades. My oldest has been working full-time in a career he loves and purchased his first home at the age of 22. My second oldest worked very hard finishing her cosmetology career in just 9 months, while also working a part time job, and she has been working as a hair stylist since she was 20 years old. (COVID-19 taught us how important service careers are.) My other two children are still being home schooled.

I am concerned with HF 1269 because it is a step backward in our freedoms to home educate our children. Now that I have home schooled my children for 18 years, I am absolutely convinced that the annual nationally normed achievement test does not accurately show the learning accomplishments of children. Children are so much more than a number on a page, and by reporting their test scores to my school district, and to the state of Minnesota, I feel that all they have learned about academics, relationships and the world around them, reduces them to a statistic that doesn't even accurately show how much they really know. Many children have learning challenges and many children have test anxiety. I know this first hand. My second child, the one successfully working as a licensed hair stylist, has dyslexia and ADHD. It took her longer to learn to read and she had really bad test anxiety. Homeschooling has given her the freedom to work at her pace and use materials that helped her succeed. A test score doesn't show this. (She took PSEO classes and was a straight A student making the Dean's list.) I know so many families that homeschool for a variety of reasons and the parents are doing everything they can to make sure their children succeed. Some of these children have challenges and they are beautifully overcoming these challenges despite some lower test scores because their parents know that their children are more than a test score. I am not testifying against these tests but I am testifying against the reporting of the test scores. I am concerned about the loss of our freedoms and where HF 1269 will take us in the future. I don't want to teach to the test. There is just so much more to learn!

Jessica Fulcher
Duluth, MN

Written testimony for House Education Policy Committee hearing on HF 1269 - 2/7/23

From: Amanda Chandler - Brooklyn Park, MN

Date: February 6, 2023

RE: Opposition to HR1269

My name is Amanda Chandler. I am a mother to 2 children ages 8 years and 4 years. We chose to homeschool before our oldest entered kindergarten. This is currently our 3rd year as a homeschool family and will be the first year that we will participate in standardized testing.

I'm writing my testimony today in opposition to HF1269 and more specifically the wording "(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student."

It is my understanding that the wording of HF1269 is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which then relaxed reporting requirements of homeschool educators. Without credible evidence to suggest a need for change in policy regarding the reporting of test scores I find the wording within this bill (quoted above) unnecessary, an added burden to homeschool educators as well as their school districts.

While being relatively new to homeschool in MN I fully understand my legal obligations as a MN homeschool educator. I follow all MN homeschool laws. I take the chosen position as my children's educator very seriously. I have my children's education as well as a holistic approach to their well being at heart in everything I do as their educator and mother. I feel confident in myself and other MN homeschool educators to use required standardized testing as a tool as well as their own understanding and experience being their children's educator to gauge their children's grasp of knowledge, to identify and address challenges and to lead them in their path as an educator towards their children's current and future successes. I trust MN homeschool educators like myself to put the educational success and well being of their children as a top priority. Children learn at different paces including leaps, challenges and triumphs. Standardized tests, having both pros and cons, are a useful tool, but definitely do not give a full picture of academic knowledge or school effectiveness. Parent educators, having their child's whole well being at heart, are capable of using tools and seeking help when needed to assess and ensure their child's educational growth. Therefore I do not understand nor see the need for added requirements and reporting.

References:

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<https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/what-standardized-tests-do-not-measure/>

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Written Testimony for Minnesota House Education Policy Hearing

February 8, 2023 3:00 pm

To whom it may concern:

I understand the committee is considering legislation that would require Minnesota homeschooling parents to submit their student's annual standardized test scores to an arm of the government. While I believe the requirement to test is a reasonable safeguard to impose on homeschooling families, the slippery slope of government intrusion into homeschooling must stop there.

The law already provides the means to investigate homeschooling families where there is valid suspicion or evidence of wrongdoing. This change, therefore, is simply an attempt to open the door to additional requirements in subsequent years. As more and more information becomes required, Minnesota homeschooling families would be forced to replicate systemic "school-at-home" environments. No doubt this is some people's misguided goal. Many families choose, and indeed are driven into, homeschooling precisely to find a better educational environment for their children than what has become of the traditional school setting.

The flaw in our current education system is that it treats individual students as products going to market, churning out so many widgets from its assembly line. Every year, however, more and more children are harmed by this assembly line and instead turn to homeschooling. So often these students are experiencing mental health crises, new diagnoses of learning struggles and unmet needs as gifted learners. The last thing they need is the school they've just left intruding further into their lives.

I've lived this situation after trusting the traditional education system, both district school and charter school, with my child, I've talked with other parents considering homeschooling in similar circumstances and I see people in these circumstances join online Minnesota homeschooling communities. The educational system that caused these students' trauma will never have a role in healing that trauma. It must get out of the way and allow parents to nurture their children, and allow children to heal from the harm caused by the education system.

I, myself, once bought into this student-as-widgets philosophy, until my own twice exceptional child with autism and ADHD was harmed by it and insisted homeschooling was the only path forward for him. While I had been a practicing lawyer for more than a decade, my child was far more important to me than my career and it has been my mission to responsibly provide for his educational growth from fourth grade on. He is now a sophomore and attending PSEO classes. He would not have achieved this success had I not been able to oversee his education in a manner that worked for him. While we complete our annual testing requirement and keep records of learning, we know that one test score on one day each year does not define him or his ability to succeed. Further government intrusion into his education after he experienced educational trauma would have hindered his success.

I urge the committee to abandon this children-as-widgets philosophy. It was used several years ago to reduce the previous six rationales for charter schools existence solely to promoting higher test scores, something else that harmed my children as well as many others. I served on a charter school board at the time of that change and observed the increased stress on staff and the reduced focus on the whole child in favor of the almighty test score. Children are individuals and today's over reliance on test scores in education has become harmful to many of them. Once the traditional educational system has traumatized a student with its inability to meet his or her needs, it must get out of the way and quit hindering that child's success, not intrude further into that child's life.

Sincerely,

Laurel Smith

HF1269, Section 2(b)1-3

Madame chair and honorable committee members.

Thank you for your diligent work and for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is David Buchs, a resident of Fairhaven, in Stearns county, and I am the father of 6 children.

I speak against the adoption of the amendment found in lines 3.7-3.12, which increases the level of reporting required from parents who wish to homeschool their children. With this amendment parents would be required to include “a copy of the actual test scores” in their letter of intent to homeschool.

This is a significant change to the law. It is a further erosion of rights that belong to parents by nature, rights that should be carefully guarded.

Homeschooling parents are already compelled to make a concession when they have to agree to administer standardized tests to their children.

That concession alone is dangerous because it assumes that parents’ goals for educating their children are identical with the goals of the state, that the state has the final say on measuring the success of education, and that state goals for education may override goals that parents have.

That is contrary to the nature of our system of governance. State interest in education comes only by delegation of authority that originally belongs to parents. Parental authority comes first, and state authority is subordinate. State authority in the matter of education comes into existence only through the consent of those same parents that it now seeks to bind.

To add an additional requirement that test results must be submitted annually is to increase the force of that dangerous concession.

It binds families to standards in education to which parents never agreed, standards in which parents may have no say whatsoever, and standards with which parents may in fact fundamentally disagree.

It binds families to standards in education that are subject to change, which have changed dramatically in the past, and which are likely to change in ways that are not only disagreeable but fundamentally contrary to the way many honest, upright, loving parents would measure success in educating their children.

I urge the members of this committee to strike the proposed amendment and thereby preserve the natural rights of parents and families in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

David Buchs

I am emailing to submit my testimony to oppose HF1269. This word change is not needed. It's would create unnecessary work for school district to collect exstra paperwork. I also believe it could provide government officials or other agents with the unconstitutional authority to see private data. Parents should be the ones who decide how their children are educated. Also this reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which make the way to simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers.

Thank you for your time, Tina Schmidt

I am opposed to bill HF 1269 and companion SF 1311 requiring homeschooling families to send annual test scores to the school district.

A timed test score could fluctuate depending on many circumstances in which the testing is administered including but not limited to an emotional event from a loss or death in the family, a catastrophic event such as an act of war, a current or new pandemic, illness, disability, etc.

Various factors could compound the traumatic events taking place during the time of testing.

Timed testing in more difficult subjects puts undue stress on the child resulting in possible lower test scores. Therefore, the test scores may not reflect the actual knowledge of the child.

Plus, please also consider the errors of the testing institution either not sending the test results or the school district not receiving the results with unreliable internet or USPS. Because the USPS has failed to deliver yearly paperwork to our school district even when sent certified, I have had to make sure it has been personally delivered.

Thank you for considering the various factors why yearly test submission could cause many problems for testing institutions, school districts, students and families. Also, who would be held liable for any possible legal actions that may result if carelessly or irresponsibly handled incorrectly?

Sincerely, Shenda Skalski

February 6, 2023

Minnesota House Education Policy Committee

Re: HF 1269

House Education Policy Committee:

I am writing in opposition to HF 1269.

Minnesota's current homeschooling laws were established after much work done by the homeschool community, the Legislature, and school district personnel. They took time to carefully look at the issue and form reasonable procedures that **both local districts and homeschooling families supported**. The procedures established under the Homeschool Mandate Reduction Law are working well. Why change them? Let districts focus on getting their students back up to speed after the well-documented setbacks resulting from the pandemic. They need to work with helping their students achieve. Homeschool parents need to focus on helping their children achieve. Again, please don't try to fix what isn't broken.

As a homeschool parent, I appreciate seeing my children's standardized test scores each year and using them to inform my goal setting and curriculum planning for them. However, I also use many other forms of assessment to form a full picture of my children's abilities, achievements, and needs. Standardized, multiple choice tests give only a very limited view of each child. The younger the child, the more this is true. I know this as a parent and as a former teacher and former instructor in the College of Education at the University of Northwestern- St. Paul. Many homeschool families have left the public schools out of frustration with so much time being spent teaching to the test rather than seeking to truly educate the whole child. Homeschool parents spend the entire school day with their children. We know their strengths and weaknesses already. Standardized tests are a tool in a parent's toolbox. They are not on their own a valid evaluation of a child's abilities.

Parents care and know their children better than anyone. They are more committed than anyone to their children's growth and success in life. Research on homeschoolers repeatedly show them outperforming their public-school counterparts. In fact, 78% of peer-reviewed studies comparing academic achievement between homeschoolers and public-schoolers showed homeschoolers performing significantly better (Ray, 2017). The different homeschooling requirements of each state had no effect on their homeschoolers' achievement scores. The proposed changes will be a useless burden to both homeschool families and school districts.

Homeschooling families today are a diverse population. By 2021, only 20.4% of the homeschool population identified as white, 18.3% as black, 18.2% as Latino, 15.1% as Asian, and 20% as Other (2021 HPS, US Census Bureau). The limitations and problems with using standardized tests with minority populations is especially well-documented. Please keep testing as a parent's tool, not as an unfair evaluation. I urge you to read and consider *The Right to Be and Become: Black Home-Educators as Child Privacy Protectors* from Najarian R. Peters in the Michigan Journal of Race and Law available at <https://repository.law.umich.edu/mjrl/vol25/iss1/3>. Peters' research shows the necessity of protecting minority children's right to privacy, specifically through homeschooling.

In closing, it is estimated that homeschoolers save taxpayers \$27 billion nationwide. They do this while successfully educating their children. Let's continue letting the public schools focus on their work and the homeschoolers continuing theirs. The proposed changes will simply burden both the school districts

and homeschool families. HF 1269 would put Minnesota out of step with the laws of the vast majority of other states. Please reject the HF 1269 and leave everyone free to do their critical work of educating children.

Thank you for listening.

Michelle Hanson

702 Main St. E.

Mapleton, MN 56065

507-524-4080

michellemhanson@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to say that I strongly oppose the language in the HF 1269 bill that would make more paperwork for homeschool families and administrators who have better things to do with their time. Homeschooling has been shown over and over again for years to be one of the most effective ways to educate a child and does not need to be infringed upon by the government in any way.

I was homeschooled for several years when I wasn't doing well in school and it was a huge blessing in my life. I went on to do extremely well in high school, taking IB classes and graduating with a 4.0. I went on to get a Bachelor's with honors. To this day, I am thankful for my parent's time homeschooling me and am homeschooling my own children now.

Please oppose this bill,

Best,

--

Samantha Quant

Piano Teacher

612-386-3039

www.giftofpiano.com

February 6, 2023

Dear Mr. Wilson Lee,

It has come to my attention that a bill has been proposed that would further encroach upon the freedom of choice parents enjoy regarding their children's education, especially homeschooling families. By requiring them to submit test results to school officials and giving said officials wide latitude in determining whether the testing was done to their liking, this proposal not only creates busywork for all involved but, more egregiously, erodes one of the precious liberties that makes hard-working, law-abiding parents like me choose to put down roots and invest our time and energy here in our Minnesotan communities.

These new requirements do not solve any problem. They do not add any value. They do not protect anyone. At best they accomplish nothing. At worst they provide a legal loophole for people with potentially bad intentions to punish and coerce others into submitting to their authority and set a dangerous precedent. Please consider what Judge Stephen Dillard, chief judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals, had to say on the topic in *Borgers v. Borgers* [1].

"The liberty interest of parents to direct the upbringing, education, and care of their children is the most ancient of the fundamental rights we hold as a people... This cherished right derives from the natural order, preexists government, and may not be interfered with by the State except in the most compelling circumstances. And while I agree with the majority that the trial court lacked the authority to alter the parties' custody agreement in this contempt action, I write separately to express my serious concerns with the court's decision to summarily substitute its judgment regarding the child's education for the mother's without identifying evidence of the compelling circumstances necessary to interfere with her constitutional parental rights. In doing so, the trial court failed to give sufficient consideration to the federal and Georgia constitutions, both of which afford significant protection of a parent's right to the care, custody, and control of his or her child — which undoubtedly includes the right to make educational decisions."

I respect your time and seldom involve myself in politics beyond voting and making campaign contributions, but this is very important to me. I was homeschooled here in Minnesota and benefited greatly from it. It was the opposite of an impediment; it was a boon--a precious gift from my parents. My mother chose to sacrifice a rewarding career in occupational therapy so that she could be more involved in her children's lives, and I have priceless memories of doing math and physics exercises on the whiteboard in our basement with my now deceased father, who inspired me to become an engineer like him. In high school I attended college classes at Century College in White Bear Lake, MN, thanks to Minnesota's PSEO program, and I recall the bookstore clerk commenting on his surprise at how many of us "homeschool kids" were taking calculus whereas many other new students tested into pre-college levels. I went on to receive a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and later a master's degree also [2] and have been gainfully employed for 15 years and counting.

In contrast, the public school system is in crisis. Many families see school as "free day care" and education as merely a means to an end (i.e., skills to be used for employment or knowledge to facilitate living a more comfortable life). Virtue and philosophy have seemingly disappeared from people's minds. This is tragic enough on its own, yet there are many other serious problems such as bullying, mass shootings, underpaid teachers, and sexual abuse/harassment. (I have two young daughters and intend to do whatever I can to improve their unfortunately appallingly terrible odds of becoming victims of violence [3].) Plus there is growing concern that public institutions can and are being pressured to function not for their good intended purposes but rather as tools for furthering political agendas. I refuse to voluntarily entrust my children to the care of people who have little regard for their individual worth or who see them merely as fertile soil for their self-serving ideas rather than bright minds capable of forming and articulating their own. It would behoove policymakers to investigate why so many parents are seeking alternate educational options for their children rather than empower floundering institutions to make it more difficult for families to exercise their freedom of

pursuing alternative options. Forcing people to be part of a broken system will not fix it, though it may delay progress in the same way that lending money to a failing business is likely to momentarily forestall its inevitable collapse. (See also [4])

I urge you to oppose this bill, and I am willing to testify during the hearing, if that would help raise policymakers' awareness of the ill-founded nature of these proposals.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jacob Quant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Jacob Quant
Resident of Ham Lake, MN

- [1]: <https://thenewamerican.com/is-there-a-constitutional-right-to-homeschool/>
- [2]: <https://www.parchment.com/u/award/8699bf158e828b43a15024f9a43bfd60>
- [3]: <https://www.nsvrc.org/statistics>
- [4]: <https://libertarianinstitute.org/articles/the-public-school-exodus-will-revolutionize-education/>

Dear House Education Policy Committee member –

As a homeschool mom for the last 16 yrs, I oppose HF 1269 related to the additional testing requirements being proposed for homeschoolers. Our family has been homeschooling since 2007 and I was greatly relieved when in 2011 the Homeschool Reduction Mandate Bill went into effect. As a former public-school teacher, I can speak to both homeschooling and public schooling and I know the Homeschool Reduction Mandate bill benefitted my kids by creating greater freedom in my time and ability to provide quality education at home for my kids. I've learned amazing techniques and skills for educational success while homeschooling my boys. Some of the things I've learned would have vastly improved my public school students' lives, but I was never taught them at my prestigious liberal arts college.

My husband and I graduated one son in 2020 and he now works full time in the banking sector. I still have two sons at home. My middle son is 16 and works part-time, schools full-time at home, and has still been able to earn 15 college credits through the C.L.E.P. program so far this school year, while also having a small woodworking business. He's planning to do PSEO full-time next year at Pine Tech Community College in their Construction Tech program. My youngest son is 13 and spent last week doing his regular school work and activities, as well as working on coding a robot to complete various tasks through the Civil Air Patrol's AEM program. We homeschool because we feel that we can provide a greater, more individualized education for our kids. Initially we used the Peabody Assessment for our standardized testing requirement each year, but by the time my oldest was 12 we had to switch to the California Achievement Test because he had TESTED BEYOND the abilities of the Peabody Assessment and the proctor could no longer use it on him! Since switching, all my boys test grade levels beyond their actual grade level. Their abilities and potential are obvious, not because of their test scores, but because of all they are doing day in and day out.

I'm concerned that this potential new requirement will shift the momentum of homeschooling from one that is individualized for EACH KID to one that is much like the public school system where teachers have to spend valuable time TEACHING TO THE TEST, rather than focusing on the needs and struggles of the students. Homeschooling is chosen by parents because they are WILLING AND ABLE to take the time to give their kids the best education possible. Please do not consider putting more burden on homeschool parents who are trying to do the best for their kids already!

Sincerely,

Rachel Schwendinger

Dear Representative,

I am asking that you would oppose Bill HF1269 from being passed. I have been successfully homeschooling my children full-time for the last 16 years and plan on teaching the rest of my children for the next 16 years. I feel that the bill is unnecessary and will add hardship and inconvenience to the parents who are already doing everything they can to educate their children. I am worried it will lead to unnecessary and unwanted restrictions for the hardworking homeschooling parents across the state. We desire to continue to exercise our God given freedoms. Thank you for listening to and representing the caring people of Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bervig

We are asking you to OPPOSE HF1269 because it seeks to add a new requirement of reporting for homeschoolers

Homeschoolers already are required to check in with the school district if test scores fall below 30%.

My school district is so inundated with new homeschoolers it is putting a strain on their resources/services. I can't imagine adding this burden to the district.

At a time when the national trend is LESS reporting for homeschoolers, rather than more, this would be a step backward for Minnesota homeschool freedoms. The 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill put forth simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers, which was a relief for their families, but also for their districts. At that time, the school districts also concluded that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers.

Again, please OPPOSE HF1269.

Angela Helgeson

Rachel O'Banion
raobanion@gmail.com

To the Members of the House Education Policy Committee,

I am writing to express my concerns over HF1269 and the new requirements proposed for home educators.

No clear reason has been provided to show the necessity of the change requiring home education families to submit their annual standardized test score to their respective school district.

Home education families are already required to maintain records of annual standardized testing scores and provide these to the school district if a concerns arise. I am not aware of any concern widespread enough to justify this wholesale change in policy requiring all test scores to be submitted to school districts. Without a significant concern to instigate the change, the new policy would unduly burden both parents and Minnesota school districts with additional administrative busywork and paper filing.

In addition, this requirement is contrary to the Homeschool Mandate Reduction Bill of 2011, without any clear event initiating a need for the change.

Please include these concerns in the testimony provided at tomorrow's hearing.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel O'Banion

Education Committee Written Testimony

RE: HF 1269 Homeschool Requirements

February 6, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a homeschool parent from the Princeton area and have homeschooled in this state for 15 years. My oldest is finishing her college degree this spring.

I am writing in regards to the proposed change to reporting test scores to the school district. Currently, we already report the children homeschooling as well as the standardized tests we use. This paperwork is submitted to our district office every fall.

With this proposed additional reporting, this will increase the amount of required paperwork for homeschool families to file as well as increase the amount of paperwork the superintendents need to sift through. It is not clear why this change is needed. Homeschoolers as a rule, perform highly in college tests and this appears to be an unnecessary burden on all parties, including the school districts who are already overburdened with the students who are enrolled in public schools, for no reason other than to simply increase government involvement in the lives of average citizens.

I urge you to remove this portion from the bill and allow families in Minnesota to continue to educate their children to the high standards they already do.

Thank you,

Sarah Strawn
11745 306th Ave.

Princeton, MN 55371

Jenny Jorgensen-Kuphal
1775 Crestview Lane
Owatonna, MN 55060

February 6, 2023

Lee Wilson
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
St Paul, MN 55155

Dear Mr. Wilson:

I have lived in Minnesota almost all of my adult life. We love the people here, the culture, our cabin, and the wide variety of entertainment options, especially what the twin cities offer. However, I write to you today with a heavy heart. I am writing to you first and foremost as a homeschooling mother of more than a decade. The new legislation (HF1269) is concerning and to me and to every other homeschooling family I know. I stand against new legislation that would require further reporting for homeschooling families, and I will explain why.

As you are aware, homeschooled students score an average of 30 point higher on nationally normed standardized tests. Reporting test scores to the state, as shown in studies, does not enhance student test scores. Requiring parents to submit test scores furthers the burden of paperwork not only for parents, but for school districts as well. Are you prepared to tell staff members from each district they now need to collect, file, and follow through with more paperwork? Currently, there are 6 states in the U.S. that require homeschooled students to submit test scores to the district. This new requirement would put Minnesota behind in the advancement of homeschooling freedom.

I would like to remind you that as a representative of the people, you are required to listen to the desires of the people. The homeschool parents you hear from today represent all of us. I am certain you are not going to have any homeschooling mother stand in front of you and beg you for more oversight. It will be exactly the opposite. Homeschooling mothers are the most dedicated people that I know. We reach far and wide to make sure our children are educated in the best possible way. We make sacrifices of time and money to give our children the educational foundation that will serve them their entire adult life. We do not need or desire oversight from the state. We are not accountable to the state for our children because they do not belong to you. We respectfully ask that this new legislation be withdrawn because we have the freedom to homeschool, and this legislation infringes on our privacy and is nothing more than government overreach.

Thank you for this opportunity to be heard. I trust that you will listen to the people who are actively homeschooling their children and hear that this legislation is not desired or needed. Please act in accordance with what the people desire.

Regards,

Jenny Jorgensen-Kuphal, M.A., LPC

Good Morning Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Amee Gallagher and I wanted to speak to you all today regarding the bill HF1269. My background includes a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Music Education with a MN K-12 Music Teaching license as well as a graduate degree in Piano as well as post-graduate work overseas.

My husband and I have four children, ages 11 and under, whom we homeschool. One of these four children has a rare chromosomal abnormality which has required years of therapy for her.

I have read the bill you submitted and I strongly oppose certain parts of it.

In Section 1, line 3, you have removed the section that teachers have to successfully complete a teacher competency examination.

Furthermore, you have added, in regards to standardized testing for students, that "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation..."

In the early 2000,'s, I was the first graduating class to have to pass a teacher competency exam in order to be granted a MN teaching license. The fact that you want to remove this requirement and then require all students, including homeschoolers, to submit their standardized test scores is very disconcerting.

Currently, as it stands, it is quite easy for parents to opt their child out of the standardized testing requirements in the public school system. They have to submit a half sheet of paper that includes basic information such as your name, address, school, district, and a line where you can state why you're choosing to refuse. If homeschooled students want to opt out, the only option is to have their parents go through the long, tedious process of having their homeschool accredited. This process includes a mission statement/educational philosophy/lifetime goals, school calendar/daily schedule/grading scale, an educational plan for each subject and student, site inspection/photos, along with submitting fees and quarterly reports and evaluations. Many homeschoolers, including our family, already have a lot of these plans in place but it's the government wanting more control over what we teach and how we teach it that is concerning to us. Again, this is not the freedom we seek when we choose to homeschool. I strongly encourage you to take out the part of the bill that states that homeschoolers need to submit their standardized test scores.

In addition, I strongly oppose the newly added language in Section 16, Subd. 3,(a) that states "An eligible institution must not require a faith statement during the application process or base any part of the admission decision on a student's race, creed, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations." It states that this includes private institutions. I believe that requiring private, faith-based schools, to not have the option to include a faith statement during the application process is not allowing them their full right to exercise their freedom of religion. What would be the difference of someone like me, a teacher, having to submit a statement of diversity for any teaching position and a private, Christian school requiring potential students to submit a statement of faith? Currently, post-secondary institutions and public schools both require teaching philosophy statements along with diversity statements in their applications for teaching positions and entrance into teaching programs. How is this different? Again, I strongly encourage you to remove this language and allow schools to have the choice on whether or not to require statements of faith.

Thank you for your service and the time you have allowed me to voice my concerns.

Kindest regards,

Amee Gallagher



Testimony opposing HF1269

1 message

Jeromy Darling <jer@jeromydarling.com>
To: wilson.lee@house.mn.gov
Bcc: Lynn Varco <lvarco@mncatholic.org>

Mon, Feb 6, 2023 at 9:56 AM

I'm writing today as a Prior Lake father of 4, 3 of which are homeschooled. I was homeschooled in the 1980s. My parents were true pioneers in this country, one of about 17,000 families in America who were homeschooling at that time. I went on to graduate from Normandale Community College in 1998, a month after I turned 17, by taking advantage of their post-secondary education and being a year ahead in high school (I started kindergarten at 4). One of the greatest things my parents ever did for me was educated me at home, and I attribute my success in life, in large part, to their hard work and courage to homeschool at a time when it was very new. I've enjoyed great success as an artist, actor, performer, advocate, and public speaker, raising 4 amazing children and doing my best to model the same love, care, and devotion my parents gave to me.

It is absolutely baffling to me that our local government is choosing to pick a fight with homeschool families. According to the [National Home Education Research Institute](#), homeschooled children usually score 15 to 30 percentile points above public school students on standardized tests. [Another study led by Clive Belfield](#), an educational researcher, shows that the average score on the verbal section of the SAT for homeschooled students was 1,093.1, while the average score in public school students was 1,012.6. That means homeschooling children performed better and got 80.5 more points than the public school average.

[The Coalition for Responsible Home Education](#) claims that the average for all students taking the ACT is around 21 points. However, the average for homeschooling students is generally between 22 and 23 points.

There are many studies, and they all throw slightly different statistics. But researcher Brien D.Ray found that overall, [78% of the compared and reviewed studies confirm that homeschooled children performed significantly better](#) than their public schooled peers in terms of academic performance.

Only 11% found no significant difference, and 4% found that conventional school students performed better.

The same study indicates that 69% of homeschooled students succeed in college and adulthood.

Meanwhile, Minneapolis Public Schools has 650 vacant positions, [reports the Star Tribune](#), and parents and teachers are calling for help.

- St. Paul Public Schools were down 300 positions heading into the school year, according to [Sahan Journal](#).

Obviously, many parents hoped that schools would operate like they did pre-pandemic so their kids could get back on track. But the Star Tribune report paints a chaotic picture.

- Minneapolis is down 135 special education staff.
- One father of a child with autism said school nurses and principals have been filling in, and he's seen his son backslide. "That's basically just babysitting," he told the Star Tribune. I've worked as a PCA in high schools for the last few years, on the side, and I can tell you that this news is devastating for parents of kids with special needs.

Anoka-Hennepin Schools was also short 280 positions, many concentrated in special education and student nutrition, per Sahan Journal.

You guys released \$2,700,000,000 to public schools - why not have a hearing on how things are going with all that money? I happen to know that Individual school assessments are available on [the Minnesota Department Education's website](#). WCCO randomly chose Meadow Lake Elementary in New Hope, which saw the percentage of students meeting state standards in math fall from 44 percent in 2019 to 20 percent in 2022. In reading, they fell from 48 percent to 33

percent. Dr. Heather Mueller, our own commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education, publicly stated, "I think there are pieces of this that are absolutely attributable to the pandemic, and **I think that there are also students who were experiencing academic struggles as well as mental health struggles prior to the pandemic.**"

Six schools around the state had such low scores they will need special help.

I, and the roughly 30,000 families in this state who choose to homeschool, strongly oppose this proposed language. Specifically, we are concerned with the additional reporting requirement of including "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year." We are not clear why this onerous new requirement is being reintroduced at this time. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful. This reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill, which paved the way for simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers. At that time, the school districts also concluded that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers - nor do homeschoolers need or want the additional paperwork.

This would be a significant step backward for homeschooling freedom in Minnesota. It would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on Minnesota homeschoolers and districts. Plus, it could provide government officials or other agents with the unconstitutional authority to see private data. Parents should be the ones who decide how their children are educated.

Jeromy Darling
612-225-8165
www.jeromydarling.com

Hello,

My name is Hannah Bauman. I live in Plainview, and I've just begun my homeschool journey with my children. My oldest is in first grade.

I oppose the language change in HF129.

"(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student."

This erodes the freedom of homeschooling families. It would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on Minnesota homeschoolers and districts. I have seen that Minnesota has been a very friendly state to homeschooling. Please do not change that now.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Hannah Bauman

To Whom it May Concern regarding HF 1269:

Hello! I am writing today concerning the bill HF 1269 which is currently before the education policy committee in Minnesota. I am a homeschool parent and have been home educating my children for six years and I highly value my right to educate my children as I deem appropriate. My children work diligently each day throughout the school year and have thrived in our home educational environment. I disagree with the states attempt to further restrict and control my home education of my children. I disagree that homeschool families need to submit their children's standardized test scores to the district as this takes away the parents right to evaluate their children's progress. Please vote against HF 1269 and protect our rights to make our own decisions regarding home education. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kemper

Dear Education Policy Committee,

I am writing in opposition to HF1269 requiring homeschools to submit results of their annual testing. I am in opposition to this bill for the following reasons.

1. It is morally and should be lawfully the right of parents to be in full control of their children's education. Even having to tell the government that we are educating our children every year is excess. Having to report the progress of each child, is going beyond the unreasonable. As a graduate with a double Bachelor's major, on being in elementary education, you cannot pull the wool over my eyes. Annual testing is just to show progress of non-progress of a child in a particular area. And to use it to make changes in the future. This is just another way to have "red flags" of how parents' actually control their own child(ren)'s education.
2. It will cause and is already causing extra paperwork and time. I am having to drop working with my school are children to send you a demand to retain the parental and educational rights that we do have as parents.
3. More regulations does not always mean better education. If there are red flags in the home education communities, then offer resources, not mandate more ridiculous paper and time away from teaching.
4. Finally, are you truly seeing a delinquents in formally educated at home students? Is it such an epidemic of people that were previously home educated students that are reliant on the state or counties to provide food, shelter, and just a living period?! I say NO. You are trying to push more regulations that just waste the time of parents and lawmakers alike. And will also cause more heartache for school superintendents to regulate this and drive a further wedge between the home educating communities and the state.

Do what is right vote these and any further regulations down for the state of MN.

Sincerely,

Rebekah J. Hackert

Elementary Education teacher, home educator, self entrepreneur

Resident of Hastings, MN

House District 41B

February 7, 2023

The Honorable Representative Laurie Pryor
Chair, House Education Policy Committee
Minnesota State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: H.F. 1269 Test Reporting Requirements

Dear Representative Pryor,

There are several aspects to the proposed language embodied in HF 1269 that MACHE oppose, including the reimposition of the requirement to submit homeschooler annual standardized testing score results to the state. This is a clear reversal of the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which paved the way to simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers. The law to simplify reporting was in part based on school districts concluding that they did not want to receive or maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers, nor did homeschoolers need or want additional paperwork.

Interestingly, for public school students as codified in 120B.31, subd 4a, **student participation**, (a) The commissioner must create and publish a form for parents and guardians that, in section (6) notifies a parent of the right to not have the child participate in the state and locally required academic assessments, and asks a parent that chooses to not have a child participate in the assessments the basis for the decision.

This seems to set up deeply disparate rights and privileges with no discernable basis.

In addition to these new reporting requirements, there are other provisions seemingly providing school district superintendents discretionary and highly subjective authority to institute controls on the annual standardized testing processes of homeschoolers. This may include the test chosen, how precisely it is administered and perhaps even where it is administered. Following these onerous and non-value-added impositions, the superintendent may further require 'evidence' their protocols have been followed in order for the results to even be accepted by the superintendent. The reasons for these encroachments are not given and are frankly unfathomable to Minnesota's private and patently successful homeschool community.

Homeschooling in Minnesota is chosen by many families as a parental exercise of our freedoms to ensure that each of our children have the best and most child tailored education possible. It is a family centered approach that has consistently achieved outstanding results in educational outcomes. Homeschooling continues to evolve in Minnesota over these intervening years with more and more families of diverse backgrounds, including special needs children taking advantage of and benefiting from home education.

Homeschool families take on the mantle of home education, not because it is easy or cost free to them, because it is neither. It can be a very challenging pursuit, but the rewards are manifest in the lives of homeschooled children, and so it remains a choice for many. Any legislation that adds a burden to these families, particularly for no discernable reason, is in effect a solution in search of a problem, and an unconscionable additional burden. Homeschoolers consistently excel in testing results, including in the context of peer group outcomes. How do these proposed changes improve that existing record of achievement?

Additional Facts/Figures:

- The National Home Education Research Institute found that "78% of peer-reviewed studies on academic achievement show homeschool students perform statistically significantly better than those in institutional schools." (Ray, 2017).
- "The home-educated typically score 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests. (The public-school average is roughly the 50th percentile; scores range from 1 to 99.) A 2015 study found Black homeschool students to be scoring 23 to 42 percentile points above Black public-school students." (Ray, 2015).

<https://www.nheri.org/research-facts-on-homeschooling/>

These new mandates would be a significant step backward for homeschooling freedom in Minnesota. It would impose unnecessary and burdensome requirements on Minnesota homeschoolers and districts. And, it could provide government officials or other agents with the unconstitutional authority to see private data. Parents should be the ones who decide how their children are educated.

Monday, February 6, 2023

Dear Representatives,

It is with great concern that I write you today and ask you to oppose HF 1269.

My husband and I have been homeschooling our five children for seven years. Through homeschooling, we have had the privilege of providing one-on-one, individualized education to each of our children. We have followed the state requirements and administered standardized tests every year. My son, currently nine years old, showed a noticeable struggle with reading and comprehension in his first two years of standardized testing. By the standards of the public school district, and in comparison to his peers through the testing results, he would have been flagged as significantly behind and possibly screened for learning disabilities.

Seeing that he was struggling, we were able to note his challenges and choose specific curricula and educational approaches to meet those needs. We provided daily attention and reading guidance in a way that he would not have been able to receive in a classroom setting. He had no perception that he was "behind" and as a result did not become self-conscious or experience any pressure to perform. I am happy to share that after receiving the personalized education he needed, and patience and encouragement from his parents, he is now performing at or above grade level in all areas of his standardized tests, including reading and comprehension. He loves reading and consumes chapter books faster than we can keep up with. The nurturing he received throughout his homeschool education created a love for learning and reading that we never imagined possible.

Standardized testing is a practice that does more harm than good. It is a measure of comparison that does not accurately reflect a child's progress or predict future academic success. It puts kids in a box, creates unnecessary anxiety, and forces teachers and parents to cater to an overgeneralized and often unrealistic set of expectations without any consideration to the individual needs of children. Science shows us that children develop at different rates, and I have seen firsthand that this is true. I fear that with the requirement to report my children's standardized testing results as proposed in HF 1269, children like my son will be harmed. Allowing the district to see our test results will lead to intervention. I choose to homeschool specifically so that I have the freedom to accommodate my child's needs. If the school district involves itself and the state begins to dictate how and what my children must learn, and specifically *when* they must have it mastered, I will lose the ability to help my child succeed.

HF 1269 is a grave overstep of our state government. It is no secret that homeschooled children significantly outperform their public school peers, and this is largely because parents like myself are given the right to customize our children's education. Please do your job as our elected officials to protect our children and our rights as parents. This would be a massive step backward for homeschool freedom in Minnesota and of great detriment to our children. We would appreciate your partnership in providing the education that our children truly need.

Respectfully,

Kate Sanders, Rochester Minnesota

HF 1269
February 2023

My name is Barbara DeVries from Hutchinson, Minnesota, district 17A. I homeschool my children, so HF 1269 will directly affect my family by taking away our hard earned rights to educate our children how we see fit without government interference. I am opposed to HF 1269.

House File 1269 concerns submitting to the school district superintendent test scores of students who are not enrolled in public schools.

This bill is infuriating to people on both sides of this interaction. The administration of the public schools does not want the added responsibility of dealing with paperwork that involves students who are not enrolled in public school. The parents of homeschool students and the teachers of private schools do not want to lose their right of privacy to the public school system.

There is no need to require test scores to be submitted to a system that has nothing to do with the education of that student.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the rights of we the people of Minnesota. Please do not make the government of our state even more heavy-handed than it already is.

February 6, 2023

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I am writing to document my opposition of proposed changes to HF1269, that includes a provision requiring homeschoolers to report annual test scores to public school officials.

Minnesota Compulsory Instruction statutes, sections 120A.22, 120A.24 and 120A.26 allow parents to create private schools in their home for their children. These nonpublic schools are predominately financed by parents – not the state or the local public school district. So, why should the state or local public school district be involved in annual testing oversight? Minnesota is already one of the most restrictive and controlling homeschool states in the nation, and yet these proposed changes aim to further infringe on parental rights and freedoms. The below Minnesota homeschool laws are already in place to highly regulate homeschooling, why does this need to be regulated even further with homeschools reporting test results?

- Must notify local school district of homeschooling, and continue with annual notification
- Instructor must meet required qualifications to provide homeschool instruction
- Must teach required subjects
- Homeschool students must be assessed annually using a standardized achievement exam
- Must maintain documentation that required subjects are being taught and proof that tests have been administered
- Must report immunization compliance for each child

Each year a Minnesota homeschool student must be assessed using a standardized achievement exam, something public school students have the option to opt out of while homeschool students do not. There is also a requirement for further evaluation if scoring is below a 30% threshold, again a requirement of homeschoolers only. This homeschool requirement alone addresses lower performance on assessments, without involvement by public schools. With these assessment requirements already in place, what does the state hope to achieve by meddling further in nonpublic school test results by public school officials?

Homeschools choose which standardized achievement test will be used to evaluate their students, in agreement with the Superintendent of their local school district. Therefore, these test results are meaningless to the state for data interpretation as they are not relatable to public school district data. There is a strong national trend to reduce or eliminate mandatory testing for homeschoolers. At the present time, only 6 states require the reporting of assessment results and yet Minnesota is pushing to go backwards and become more restrictive and intrusive with homeschooling rights. Why the need to modify something that has been working without public school oversight simply to create more work, hassle, and control?

According to the results of Minnesota's most recent annual state assessment and as posted by the Ciresi Walburn Foundation, barely half (51.52%) of all students are reading proficiently. According to 2022 reading test results from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), One in three Minnesota fourth graders cannot read at a "basic" level for their grade. Minnesota schools are not

successfully teaching our students how to read. This translates to a significant need in the public school system to address these shocking results instead of focusing on results of homeschool students, who's educators are already mandated to address results falling below the 30% threshold.

As quoted from the MN Department of Education, "State standards set for public schools do not apply to nonpublic schools – whether regular private schools or homeschools." Therefore, what business do public school have knowing test results of homeschools? It is burdensome both to the homeschool educators as well as the school district administrators maintaining these records. What is the purpose of this change, if not for the government to try and control homeschooling? There is no credible evidence to suggest the proposed change in standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or beneficial. Homeschoolers choose to opt out of public schools for various reasons, so isn't it infringing on those freedoms by forcing public school oversight? Are public school officials that underworked with spare time on their hands, and successful in their own public school district management that they have the capacity to interfere and supervise homeschools?

Throughout recent years the number of students withdrawing from public school systems has been astronomical. Test scores and performance have been on the decline, while mental health concerns, bullying, violence, and school safety threats have been on the rise. Students that have left the public school systems to receive nonpublic education are not the problem, they are the ones leaving the problems for a better alternative. Instead of focusing money, time and energy on trying to control those who want better for their children than what the public schools have provided, these resources could be better allocated to correct the problems that public schools have created.

Homeschooling has been a great school option for my family. It allows us the freedom to provide a hands-on, highly customizable approach for each child; thus, increasing the children's interest in learning and achieving higher academic success. The freedom and right to homeschool is being threatened by this proposed language change. It is subjecting homeschools to control and government oversight in a place it doesn't belong. By implementing further regulations on homeschools you are driving those who have already left public schools out of the state of Minnesota as well. This will be our next move if homeschool freedoms continue to be eroded by attempted government control. I care more about my children, their future and their education far beyond anyone who wants to monitor their test scores. Minnesota's education code explicitly recognizes that a child's parent is primarily responsible for ensuring that the child acquires the knowledge and skills essential to effective citizenship. Please stay out of my home, my children's education and let me do *my* job as a parent and educator.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Sindelir
Parent and Educator – Esko, MN

Greetings,

Thank you for accepting written testimony in opposition to HF1269.

As a public school educator who also parents a homeschool family, I oppose HF1269.

School testing is a controversial subject. Questions about the integrity of the tests and as well as their overall value in the educational process should always be under review.

Even most public school educators will admit that test scores can only offer small glimpses into a student's profile, and test scores can be affected by a number of variables.

Currently in the state of Minnesota, public school families are able to opt out of testing their students. This same right should be afforded to homeschool families as well.

The current law requiring homeschool families to test their students is adequate to help parents understand their children and provide the education necessary for each child. There is no need for the state to be involved in reading or evaluating these scores, which are always to be understood in the wider context of the student's education.

Thank you,

Zachary Van Drunen

My name is Kelly Gehlen, and I am a homeschooling mother. With two undergraduate degrees and my master's degree, I firmly believe homeschooling can be very successful. I have already graduated one daughter, and I am currently home educating three other daughters.

I am against HF 1269 as this bill creates unnecessary burdens for both families and the school districts alike. This is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Reduction Bill. As homeschooling has become more popular, there is a national trend towards less cumbersome laws. Minnesota should follow likewise. Please remove the homeschooling language in HF 1269.

I have strong concerns regarding HF 1269, and oppose language that it contains. This bill is currently before the House Education Policy Committee. As proposed, it would require homeschooling parents to annually submit a copy of their student's standardized test scores along with evidence that protocols were followed.

This creates an unnecessary burden for the homeschooling parent and adds extra processing for the local school district. Homeschooling has a solid track record of positive performance and outcomes. Because of that, the State of Minnesota passed a Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill in 2011, simplifying the reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers. Besides the needless additional paperwork this would generate, there is no proof that such a change would cause any benefit to the student's education.

Homeschooling has gained freedoms from superfluous regulations in our state and in many others. Forty-four states do not require parents to submit copies of the annual test results. Adding this requirement now would be a significant step backwards.

Please amend this bill to remove this language.

Thank you for your work for the citizens of Minnesota.

Kandina Paddock
206 Brightstar Rd NW
Bemidji, MN 56601

Dear House Education Policy Committee,

I am writing to testify that I am against a portion of the **HF1269** that you are reviewing. I have been homeschooling my child for 9 years. The wording in this bill states that along with the letter of intent, homeschoolers would have to also send proof of the standardized test with results.

Here is the problematic proposed language. The notice of intent to continue homeschooling must contain:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

Back in 2011 there was a Homeschool Mandate Reduction Bill passed that made a way for easier homeschool reporting. What the **HF1269** is requesting is a step backwards for homeschooling freedoms in MN. It requires more work and paper handling on the school district's side. It also comes across as the government not trusting the parents to teach their children. As a parent, I want my children to succeed in all that they do. Also, there is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting is necessary or useful. I ask that you remove the requirement from the bill.

I thank you for your time.

Jeremy Otterstad

Dear Representatives,

I want to take a moment and reach out to you, and inform you that I strongly oppose the language in proposed legislation HF1269. Specifically, I am concerned with the additional requirement of 'proof of prior testing plan' and a 'copy of the official test scores.'

As a family who has seen our children thrive in the homeschool environment, rich with diverse opportunities in educational co-ops, sports, and the Arts, we believe strongly in the effectiveness of a homeschool education. We have had the incredible privilege to teach our own children to read, to write, to think independently and to feel the freedom to develop into their own, unique individuals. After years of homeschool education, we have the joy of watching our oldest children excel in co-op classes where they are receiving excellent grades in their classes. We have also stepped into the exciting new territory of PSEO, where our oldest daughter was able to begin college level work as an 11th grade student due to the preparation she was given at home through the years.

Our family is not the exception. Homeschool families throughout the country are having similar results with their own children. We are families who care deeply for our children and their education. We are willing to sacrifice time, income and personal opportunities for the high calling to give our children their best chance to grow up to be successful individuals with strong leadership skills, and a desire to make the world around them a better place.

I do not believe adding additional mandates in testing will benefit students, their families, or school districts. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool reporting requirements is necessary or useful. In fact, this reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which paved the way to simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers.

School districts concluded in 2011 during the Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers - nor do homeschoolers need or want the additional paperwork. According to the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, only 6 of our 50 states require families to submit an annual report of assessment results. Meanwhile, the rest of the nation is moving forward with less restrictions and greater educational opportunities and freedom. Minnesota families do not want to be left behind as the rest of the nation moves ahead. What we would ask is that our elected representatives would champion our efforts, our diligent work and fight for freedom, not restriction. Thank you for your serious consideration in supporting all of the families in our state.

Kind Regards,
Jeremy Swinborne
3820 90th St E.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

Nancy Bjorkman
13241 Island View Drive
Elk River, MN 55330
(763) 241-5225

Re: HF 1269 and SF 1311

February 5, 2023

Dear Minnesota Legislators,

I am writing with great concern over the proposed bills that would begin to require homeschooled students to submit their annual standardized test scores to the school district.

I have been directly involved with the homeschool community since 1989. I successfully homeschooled my four children. All of them attended college. I now have two with Masters degrees, one with a Phd, and the youngest serves as a Captain in the United States Air Force. Homeschooling worked!

Over the years I have taught many other students in homeschool co-ops and have been delighted to see them launch into adulthood as active, participating citizens and competent adults.

Currently, I am the owner of the only homeschool resource store in 10 states in the upper Midwest. I serve thousands of families yearly both here in Minnesota and in our neighboring states. What I see daily in our store are families with kids for whom the state schools are not working. They are sharing their stories of inadequate services for special needs or gifted students. Many are working through the challenges of mental health issues that are caused by or magnified at school with bullying, anxiety, stress, etc. Families are fed up with the content that goes way beyond the three R's. They're leaving in droves, some even choosing to move out of state.

Studies have shown that increased regulation of the homeschooling community does not improve educational outcomes and test scores which tend to be 30% higher than the scores for public school students. It is also not going to improve the education of the majority of the students in Minnesota who attend our public schools. Wouldn't the time, money, and energy of the legislature be better spent focusing on the problems in that system?

There is NO redemptive purpose in the state having these scores. They are private data. It is going to cost school districts A LOT of money to hire someone to keep track of all of this paperwork. Some districts have over 1,000 homeschooled students. This would contradict the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which saved the state thousands of dollars by reducing the paperwork required for homeschooled students.

Homeschool parents are some of the most dedicated teachers we have in our state. They pay their taxes, yet they also pay to educate their children themselves. They have a vested interest in seeing their children succeed. They have the ability to care deeply for each one of their students. Over the decades that homeschooling has been legal in Minnesota (1987), it has proven itself as

a quality model of education. These families are doing a stellar job of raising this next generation without increased oversight. The results speak for themselves.

I urge you to VOTE NO on HF 1269 and SF 1311.

Sincerely,
Nancy Bjorkman
13241 Island View Drive NW
Elk River, MN 55330
763-241-5225

Dear Sir,

I am writing to express my concern about HF1269 and SF1311. I am a homeschooling mother to two of my children. I have four, and after watching the first two go through the public schools, I was disgusted and horrified with the entire system. I want nothing to do with it, and the last thing we want or need is restrictions and regulations coming from such a broken system. Once I became a mother, I vowed to be the best mother I could be; and that suddenly included educating my children. I excel at my vocation. I am well educated, and there has been no greater joy than watching my children learn.

The regulations proposed in HF1269 and SF1311 are obviously stepping stones to encroach on my right to raise my children how I see fit. No superintendent knows my children; they do not know what "protocols" are best for them. The wording of this is dangerously vague, and gives a superintendent way too much power.

My children and how I educate them are not your business. I'm already paying taxes for an education system that I do not believe in and frankly, find repulsive. I ask you to not allow such a regulation to come into existence.

Sincerely,

Katie Jacobson
Motley, MN

6 February 2023
Testimony to HF1269

Committee Administrator Wilson,

As a home-educating parent and Area Representative for Classical Conversations of Minnesota I write this email with grave concern and opposition.

First, this bill is an unnecessary and troublesome and in fact backtracks on freedoms the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Deduction Bill put in place. Second, there is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing is needed. Third, our school districts are already burdened by their workload and they would prefer to not maintain or receive unnecessary paperwork from homeschool families.

Over the last 8 years my husband and I have chosen to educate our children at home. Our children's test scores are advanced. They are thriving socially, emotionally and academically. Covid-19, with it's restrictions and complications, fortunately did not impact our children's education - for which we are thankful. In SE Minnesota (Rochester and surrounding area) we have over 720 students who are actively homeschooling. In Minnesota, we are part of a large community of homeschoolers utilizing Classical Conversations, www.classicalconversations.com, which represents over 2,000 seats. Our children are benefiting greatly.

In conclusion, by passing HF1269, it could give government unconstitutional authority to see private data, is unnecessary, is not supported by evidence and would increase the workload of the school districts.

Thank you for your consideration in opposing the bill at stake.

Respectfully,

Kristin Rogers

Classical Conversations Area Representative

Director Rochester Campus I - Berean

PO Box 23 Oronoco, MN 55960

507-261-1611

2/5/2023

To the Education Committee,

I am a parent of four children in the state of Minnesota. I am writing to discuss the House bill HF 1269. There is a lot in this bill. Due to time I will try to simplify the major points of opposition to a 110 page bill.

First, I oppose lines 26.28-26.34 and lines 77.24-78.6 in regards to Ethnic Studies. According to the definition in Section 1, Article 2 which states, "Ethnic studies" means the critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of people of color within and beyond the United States. Ethnic studies analyzes the ways in which race and racism have been and continue to be powerful social, cultural, and political forces, and the ways in which race and racism are connected to other axes of stratification, including stratification based on gender, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and legal status. 26.30 26.31 26.32 26.33 26.34 By this definition of "Ethnic studies" it would require students to learn the framework of Cultural Marxism, teaching students to focus on power groups, to separate themselves and to view each other through the lens of a power group of oppressed or oppressor. "Ethnic studies" as found in lines 77.24-78.6 make the subjective assumptions that the children in Minnesota and all Minnesotians are inherently racist. Line 40.16 states 40.16 (j) The commissioner of education must embed ethnic studies as related to the academic standards during the review and revision of the required academic standards. 40.17 This "Ethnic studies" is nothing but theories without any support or evidence. The terms outlined in the Ethnic studies are politically charged opinions that are destructive, divisive, controversial, and damaging to our children and their future.

77.24 (e) "Ethnic studies curriculum" means the critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of People of Color within and beyond the United States. Ethnic studies analyzes the ways in which race and racism have been and continue to be powerful social, cultural, and political forces, and the connection of race to the stratification of other groups, including stratification based on gender, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and legal status. The ethnic studies curriculum may be integrated in existing curricular opportunities or provided through additional curricular offerings. 77.25 77.26 77.27 77.28 77.29 77.30 77.31 (f) "Antiracist" means actively working to identify and eliminate racism in all forms so that power and resources are redistributed and shared equitably among racial groups. 77.33 77.32 78.1 (g) "Culturally sustaining" means integrating content and practices that infuse the culture and language of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities who have been and continue to be harmed and erased through schooling. 78.2 78.3 (h) "Institutional racism" means structures, policies, and practices within and across institutions that produce outcomes that chronically favor white people and disadvantage those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. 78.5 78.6 78.4

I oppose the additions to the World's Best Workforce goals in lines 78.7-79.18 for the same reasons I have already mentioned. It should not be the goal for the state to determine for school districts that they have to focus on non-essentials in academics when the test scores for the state of Minnesota prove that our children are falling more and more behind. According to

the State of Minnesota's report card from 2022 children in Minnesota have dropped to only 44.8% of all students meeting the State's standards in Math, 51.1% of students are meeting reading standards and 41.3% are meeting the state standards in Science. Less than half of ALL students in the state of Minnesota are meeting state standards and instead of setting the World's Best Workforce Goals in the basics of academics, the state wants to add non-essential curriculum as a new goal?! We don't have our priorities right when it comes to education in the state of Minnesota and because of that our children are suffering the consequences.

(https://rc.education.mn.gov/#mySchool/orgId--999999000000__groupType--state__p--3)

In addition I oppose lines 92.5-94.5 which outlines what the strategic plan goals for school boards in the state of Minnesota should be. These goals would require teachers, school administrators, board members, paraprofessionals to validate, affirm and embrace ideologies that may go against their personal convictions, reality itself, and their religion thus breaking the first amendment rights that are meant to protect the citizens of America from the American government from mandating and dictating the belief systems of its individual citizens.

92.11 (c) The plan must include strategies to validate, affirm, embrace, and integrate cultural and community strengths of all students, families, and employees in the district's curriculum as well as learning and work environments. The plan must address issues of institutional racism as defined in section 120B.11, subdivision 1, in schools that create opportunity and achievement gaps for students, families, and staff who are of color or who are American Indian. 92.12 92.13 92.14 92.15 92.16

The first amendment states:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

(<https://constitution.congress.gov/constitution/amendment-1/>)

This amendment is there to protect the American people from the government establishing an official religion that would force all American people to adhere to. See the example of what happened in England and why this was foundational to America.

https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/amdt1-2-2-2/ALDE_00013269/

In another explanation to our first amendment rights, “The First Amendment, one of the more symbolic and litigious of the amendments, guarantees fundamental rights such as freedom of religion, speech, and the press, and the rights to assemble peacefully and to petition the government. The free exercise clause in the First Amendment prohibits the government from restricting religious beliefs and practices...”

(<https://mtsu.edu/first-amendment/article/1448/bill-of-rights>)

These new additions to HF1269 violate the first amendment rights that allows teachers, board members, administration, paraprofessionals etc. to believe and think differently than the legislators in this room and it protects their right to not have to teach, validate, affirm or embrace the belief system and worldview of secularism, marxism, racism, intersectionality, unscientific,

harmful, destructive gender ideologies that violate many personal ethical, religious, cultural, and moral belief systems. Never should the State of Minnesota or the federal government be allowed to violate the first amendment right of anyone in the education field.

For these reasons I also oppose the additions to the Curriculum policy to be implemented by school boards in lines 81.18-81.22 and I oppose the additions added in lines 19.4-19.11 that targets specifically Faith based Colleges, Universities and schools which by majority are Christian Faith based. There are many other parts I oppose in this amendment of HF1269, therefore I suggest that based on how this bill is currently written it still has work to be done to it.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Natalie Kasper

Resident of Minnesota

Myrinda Christensen
14806 160th St
Watkins, MN 55389

Dear State House Education Policy members,

My name is Myrinda Christensen and I am a homeschooling parent living in Minnesota. I am writing on behalf of myself, my family, and all Minnesota home educators to voice my strong opposition to the specific wording within HF1269 and urge this portion of the proposed bill to be removed. The sections in bold type are of particular concern to me.

Test reporting requirements proposed language:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; **(2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed**; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

The reasons to oppose this language and strike it from HF1269 are numerous, however, I will give you just a few.

First, this would unnecessarily burden homeschool families, such as mine, by requiring us to submit additional paperwork to the school district every year, along with our letter of intent, in direct contradiction to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill.

Second, standardized testing fails to capture a student’s true academic growth year-to-year for a variety of reasons, not the least of which includes the very real disadvantage of test anxiety. No student’s progress can be objectively or accurately assessed based on one annual test. Annual standardized test results are but one piece of information to analyze when assessing the academic strengths and opportunities for growth of any student.

Finally, 2022 Minnesota Statue Section 120A.22 Subdivision 1 states, **“Parental Responsibility**. The parent of a child is primarily responsible for assuring that the child acquires knowledge and skills that are essential for effective citizenship.” When a family chooses to educate their children at home, they are taking this to heart in a very real and meaningful way. It most certainly is the primary responsibility of the parent to ensure that their children are prepared to be effective citizens of this great state and nation. We, parents, are our children’s number one supporters and desire that they would achieve all of their dreams and goals in life. We all would desire them to become compassionate, competent, and productive members of society. We want them to thrive and be fulfilled in their pursuits and careers one day. I’m asking you to please reject the proposed changes to test reporting requirements for homeschools as laid out in HF1269 and instead, as many other states have done, continue to empower parent-educators to take their responsibility seriously without adding any undue burden.

Thank you for your service to Minnesotans and for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
Myrinda Christensen

To the Education Policy Committee,

I am writing to share my testimony to be heard in the hearing on bill HF1269 up for consideration on Tuesday, February 7th.

Test reporting requirements proposed language:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

I along with many of the homeschooling families in my community oppose this bill. Here is why:

1. It is a rolls back homeschooling freedoms in our state and infringes on the rights of parents to educate their children without state involvement.
2. There is no quantifiable reason for this change. In fact, data shows that homeschoolers continuously preform better in readiness and excellence that those who are not homeschooled.
3. There is not data showing that increased regulation and oversight brings better performance.
4. We oppose this because parts are vague and concerning for what additional oversight may come in the future once we have taken this step.

I’d like to tell you about my children.

First of all, my son is now 7.5 years old. He started his school experience at a private preschool at the age of 3 years old. He was already cognitively advanced for his age and enjoyed building, animals, and anything to do with math. He did excel at his preschool for a while. However, he quickly needed more. He needed more physical activity, to be challenged educationally, and to nurture the areas of his interest. We found ourselves adding more onto his days after preschool just to keep up with his hunger for learning and evolving interests.

Due to COVID, he developed a mask anxiety and we couldn’t enroll him into public school at the age of 6 due to mask mandates. We even worked with a play therapist for more than a year. He was able to re-enroll at his preschool while we added our first homeschool experience to keep up with a kindergarten curriculum so we had the option of enrolling him into public school as a first grader.

We also discovered that his anxiety was increasing due to all of the changes made to his preschool because of COVID precautions. It was really hard for him to adjust to the changes and he felt like he was trapped in one room for the majority of his time at preschool. At this time his sister (now age 5) was also at preschool with him. Although, her personality is completely

different from his, she was also experiencing anxiety and frustration from the changes. She had a mental breakdown about going to preschool, whereas previous to COVID changes she loved going to preschool.

With that being said, we knew that we needed to pull both of our children out of traditional preschool to meet both mental and emotional needs.

As we guided our children through a whole year of homeschool, we quickly noticed how their anxieties went away, they were happier, more stable, and their passion for learning increased. We were able to keep up with their educational needs and interests faster and long-term more than their traditional education could provide.

We also noticed that both of them learn differently and we are able to adjust to their individual needs whether we are speeding up or slowing down in certain subjects.

Our children go to a Nature base school. We are very involved in activities and other educational opportunities including the community education classes provided by our district.

Homeschool has been the stability our family needed and created such a foundation that has given us more opportunity to connect with our children, raise them with morals, standards, values, and the freedom of educational exploration.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Shannon Perez

Apple Valley, MN

RE: HF1269

To Madam Chair Pryor and Honorable Education Policy Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

I come to you as a homeschool mother of 5, who has been homeschooling our children for the past 4 years. I am writing here in direct opposition to the language included in HF1269 surrounding test reporting requirements for homeschoolers. Specifically, the language that states, "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year."

When we made the decision to homeschool, our child was a good student. Since we have been homeschooling, our child has blossomed as I am able to cater to his, and now his siblings, unique and individual needs. They are given the freedom and ability to think critically. Their annual tests have shown that they are at or well above grade level. In fact, studies have shown that this tends to be the trend among homeschoolers. Homeschooled students are scoring 30 points higher on standardized tests when compared to their public educated peers. Increasing regulation, as would happen under HF1269, would not increase test scores. It would however, put additional burdens on families as well as our already burdened school districts, resulting in more time and money spent. The proposed requirement does not hold any merit to benefiting the child.

I would like to thank the committee for their time today and I urge the committee to oppose HF1269.

Thank you, Lisa Flerlage

My family and I strongly oppose this proposed language. We have happily homeschooled in Minnesota for 7 years. Many of those years, you have tried to push this same wording and agenda onto homeschooling families. Everytime, the homeschoolers in this great state have rallied and shown that we do not support more regulation on our lives or schooling.

This proposed language unnecessarily adds more paperwork and regulatory burden on parents and school administrators. Instead of using valuable resources to keep track of test scores from students who do not attend public schools, use the resources to better the schools for the students you are responsible for. Use your time, resources and money where it belongs- with your public school students.

There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful. In fact, of the states that require annual assessments, only 6 require parents to submit a copy of the test results.

As homeschooling has become more popular, the national trend has been towards more freedom, not more paperwork.

This language would be a significant step backwards for homeschool freedom.

Thank you for your service to our state. And thank you for your passion for public education. Please, let the homeschoolers continue to homeschool as we see fit. We are just as passionate about our children's education as you are about the children in the public school system and we want to keep our rights.

-Jessica Obermesik

Homeschooling Mom

Hi,

I am writing you today to inform of my family's strong opposition to HF1269 and SF1311.

We are against the additional reporting requirement of including, "a copy of the actual test scores from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year." There is no credible evidence that would suggest a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements as useful or necessary. This reporting requirement goes against the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill. At that time, the school districts themselves said that they did not want to receive and maintain paperwork from homeschoolers – nor do we need or want any additional paperwork.

This would definitely be a huge step backward for our homeschool freedom here in Minnesota. It would put unnecessary requirements on us as homeschoolers. We, the parents, should be the ones who decide how to educate our children.

Thank you for your attention,

Barbara Smith

February 5, 2023

My name is Carley Sonnen and I am a homeschooling mother of five children. I am testifying my opposition to HF1269 that would require homeschoolers to include their students' test scores to the superintendent.

This bill does not discuss any data privacy protections when submitting a minor's test scores to the superintendent. How will their privacy be maintained? How will it be insured that their information is not sold off to various companies for marketing purposes or future contracts with companies within the state or school districts?

The Minnesota Statutes 2020, section 13.32, subdivision 3 discusses some of the reasons data can be disclosed but it is not clear if this would apply to the testing information.

Thank you for your time,

Carley Sonnen
Afton, MN

To the Education Policy Committee,

I am writing to share my testimony to be heard in the hearing on bill HF1269 up for consideration on Tuesday, February 7th.

Test reporting requirements proposed language:

“(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent’s office were followed; and (3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.”

I along with many of the homeschooling families in my community oppose this bill. Here is why:

1. It is a rolls back homeschooling freedoms in our state and infringes on the rights of parents to educate their children without state involvement.
2. There is no quantifiable reason for this change. In fact, data shows that homeschoolers continuously preform better in readiness and excellence that those who are not homeschooled.
3. There is not data showing that increased regulation and oversight brings better performance.
4. We oppose this because parts are vague and concerning for what additional oversight may come in the future once we have taken this step.

I’d like to tell you about my son, he is 5 and in kindergarten. I assure you, he is better prepared for the next steps in life than many children his age. He went to a private preschool for a year from ages 3-4. In the beginning and against my suggestion, he was placed in the 3 year old class. Fortunately, this particular school (private) was excellent at meeting the child where they are and he was moved into the 4 year olds class by the end of the first day. It was evident that the 3’s room and curriculum couldn’t teach him anything he didn’t already know.

He could count to 50 by 3. He knew his ABCs and the sounds of all the letters by 3, he could spell his name at 2.5. He has an insatiable interest for games that involve math and strategy. He found all those things once he was in a room that was more tailored for him.

I liken this to our homeschool journey. He is learning far beyond his age because I am able to go where his mind naturally leads us.

At 5 years old, he is reading largely independently. He can count to any number he wishes in English and to 100 in Spanish! He can tell you the names of all the planets, in order, and he even remembers that “little dwarf planet Pluto”. He knows Uranus is full of gas, and Mercury is too hot for life. He can tell you about condensation and clouds and what makes it rain. He is solid in addition, subtraction and even beginning to understand multiplication.

He is smart, and kind, and he is ready to take on school every morning. Changes that restrict homeschoolers, especially unnecessary, untargeted changes that have now data driven outcome in mind – would restrict him. And his little brother, who is hot on his heels. He just turned 3 and he is

learning from me when I teach his brother, and he is learning from his brother when they play together.

I hope you will consider them, and the countless other children like them as you decide how to move forward with this bill and vote NO.

Thank you for allowing the chance to share our story.

Alysia Cook

Apple Valley, MN

Written Testimony Concerning HF1269

Attn: Education Policy Committee, Minnesota House of Representatives

Greetings,

I am writing regarding HF1269, and I am submitting this written testimony for the 7 February 2023 meeting by the Education Policy Committee. I particularly wish to address the proposed portion of HF1269 which would require homeschoolers to submit annual standardized test scores to local school districts, rather than keep them on file at home.

I have homeschooled my 4 children in a total of 5 different states. Each of these states has had its own homeschool laws. I can tell you without hesitation that my abilities and effectiveness as a home educator have *never* been enhanced by more regulations. I have sampled many sets of homeschool laws, and the ones that allow me to give my children the very best education possible are the ones that trust me most as a parent, and allow me to operate as independently as possible.

I homeschool precisely because I wish to tailor each child's education to his/her needs and individual goals. I homeschool in order to have the freedom to teach to the child, not to a particular test. My children excel at the standardized tests they have taken, but their scores are my private property. I use them in my homeschool planning, to consider how best to educate my children.

There is no practical reason to burden local school systems by requiring them to hold on file or review annual test scores for homeschoolers. What school system in our state has extra resources like this? What practical purpose would this requirement serve? There exists absolutely no research to suggest that this step would improve education for homeschoolers.

The 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill in the Minnesota legislature paved the way to simplify annual reporting requirements for homeschoolers. The school districts of the state maintained at that time that they had no wish to receive and keep unnecessary paperwork. This bill of 2011 lifted the burden for local school districts and for homeschooling parents. Taking steps backward to reverse this progress would serve no purpose.

Sincerely,
Susan Keister
Rochester, MN

Submitted to Wilson Lee, committee administrator, via e-mail, 5 February 2023, Sunday.

Dearest Mr. Lee,

Respectfully, please do not pass the HF1269 bill proposing greater government control of our children and homeschooling in Minnesota. As parents, please know that we love our children more than anyone else can. We want to give them the best possible start in life (that should say it all). We do not need government interference dictating how we homeschool, nor should they need to access our children's annual test scores, which this bill is proposing. This adds an unnecessary burden to homeschoolers and the public school district to maintain these records and raises the question for what purpose.

Research has shown children who homeschool often outperform their peers and more regulation does NOT improve education outcomes. (Ray, 2010)

This bill may appear to have the child's best interests in mind but in all actuality my husband and I have our children's best interests in mind! We do not need more government control over our children and their learning environment. Parents should be the ones who decide how their children are educated.

Thank you for always defending our rights as Minnesotans and specifically as homeschooling parents.

Kindest Regards,
Angie Mehr

I homeschool my children not to prepare them for exams, but to prepare them for life. – Tamara L Chilver

We, Aaron and Kimberly of Milaca, MN are opposed to HF1269
Specifically, we are concerned with the additional reporting requirement of including "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year." We are not clear why this onerous new requirement is being reintroduced at this time. There is no credible evidence to suggest that a change in homeschool standardized testing reporting requirements is necessary or useful. This reporting requirement is contrary to the 2011 Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill which paved the way to simpler reporting requirements for Minnesota homeschoolers. At that time, the school districts also concluded that they did not want to receive and maintain unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers -

This is wrong on multiple levels. more regulations do not bring about more productivity.

**It is going to cost school districts A LOT of money to hire someone to keep track of all of this paperwork. Some districts have over 1,000 homeschooled students

*Studies have shown that high regulation of homeschoolers does NOT increase test scores.

Aaron and Kimberly Peterson
15357 140 Ave
Milaca, MN 56353
320-983-2191
ankriders@gmail.com

I am writing in opposition to HF1269 requiring homeschools to submit results of their annual testing. I oppose this bill on the following points.

It would require excessive and unnecessary paperwork in an already-busy homeschool year in addition to the time, staffing, and funding necessary for the public school system to process this increase in paperwork and record keeping in addition to their regular duties to the students of the public school system to whom their primary duty lies.

Test scores are private data intended solely to guide the homeschool parent and would serve no purpose to the public school system as the student does not attend there. There is no foreseeable need for the school to have access to information that is irrelevant to them, which again, would be adding to the extra time and cost of their record keeping at the expense of taxpayers including homeschools.

More regulation and oversight does not equal better results. Homeschooled students consistently test higher than their public school counterparts as peer reviewed studies have shown.

Homeschooling is individualized to meet the unique needs and learning styles of each student, as such standardized testing only seeks to compare them to a system of which they are not a part.

We should trust families to make informed decisions about their children's education which includes all aspects of their decision to homeschool not attempt to increase their ties to a system they have opted out of.

Please consider these points in deciding to pursue this legislation further.

Sincerely

Sasha Sobaszekiewicz Griner
Resident of Hastings MN, House District 41B

My name is Ana Swinborne and I am writing to oppose HF1269, the Education Policy Omnibus Bill. I am a homeschooled student in my junior year of high school. Recently, I have started taking college-level courses through the PSEO program, which I have excelled in due to my thorough education. I have also been a part of a co-op where I have only received grades higher than 98%. I am not against this suggested policy for fear of accountability. My homeschooled sisters, fellow homeschool students, and I have all done very well in school and our yearly standardized testing. Rather, I oppose this policy because it impedes our independence, privacy, and freedom. I believe that the government was made for the people, not the people for the government.

Homeschooling students have a passion for learning, achieving good grades, and preparing themselves for a successful future. We believe that our parents, who know us the best, should be responsible for our education and should be the ones who help prepare us for adulthood. A change in homeschool reporting requirements does not appear to be necessary or useful. I know it would not be beneficial for homeschooled students, families, or school districts to create even more paperwork.

Secondly, in 2011, school districts concluded in the Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill that they did not desire to secure unnecessary paperwork from homeschoolers. Likewise, homeschooling families did not and still do not think it is necessary to add additional, useless paperwork. The Homeschool Mandate Reduction bill made reporting better for everyone.

I ask that the voices of homeschoolers across the state would be heard and that the independence and freedom of every individual would be protected across the state of Minnesota. I am praying for the discernment and guidance of the leaders as they make this decision regarding the liberty of every family in the state. Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards,
Ana Elizabeth Swinborne
3820 90th St E.
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

To Members of the Education Policy Committee,

My name is Maggie Simons and I live in Rosemount with my husband and our four children. I am writing today to convey my concerns with the proposed bill HF1269 and to express my opposition to it. We have concerns about many things in this large, omnibus-style bill, but as a homeschooling family, our greatest concern lies with the changes to test reporting requirements which is what I'd like to address today.

The proposed language is this (in Division 2, Subdivision 1, regarding annual reporting):
"(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation; (2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed;

I find myself questioning why this new requirement of submitting test scores is being introduced at this time. Where is the credible evidence to suggest that test scores of homeschooled children have caused concern? No data has ever shown that increased regulation or oversight has resulted in any improvement to performance for homeschoolers - on the contrary, homeschoolers continually and greatly outperform their public school counterparts in excellence and readiness. Not only does this seem unnecessary, but it seems to indicate a step backwards for homeschooling freedom in Minnesota. Across the nation, the overall trend is less regulation for homeschoolers, not more. Since homeschoolers perform better than public school students, would their test scores be used to inflate the overall scores that gauge how well our schools are doing?

Another concern is the language of line 2 - "any protocol agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed". This is vague and permissive language that seems to leave a lot of room for additional expectations to be put on homeschoolers in the future.

It seems backwards to make increasing the oversight of homeschoolers a priority right now, when it is clearly the public school system that needs attention. This is in large part why more parents are choosing to homeschool.

In conclusion, I believe this proposed requirement is an unwarranted infringement on parental rights. It opens the door for further restrictions and could provide government officials or other agents with the unconstitutional authority to see our private data. I've appreciated the use of testing our kids to use as a tool to see which areas they excel in and which we can work on more together, but I have no need or desire to partner with the state in this endeavor. Parents need to maintain the right to educate their children as they see fit, without government involvement.

Again, I ask for you to vote no to this bill.

Thank you,
Maggie Simons

HF1269 – Bill Name in House or Rep

SF1311 – Bill name in the Senate

Good morning, Mr. Wilson Lee,

I am asking you to vote no to SF1311/HF1269 bill proposing greater government control of homeschooling in Minnesota.

As homeschooling parents, we do not believe the government needs to dictate how we homeschool and what we use to homeschool, nor should they need to access our children's annual test scores, which this bill is proposing. This adds unnecessary burden to homeschoolers (and the public school district) and gives big brother more control.

As homeschooling parents, we tailor our children's education to meet the specific needs of each student in an organic and supportive setting. Research has shown that children who homeschool often outperform their peers and more regulation does not improve education outcomes.

As homeschooling parents, we do not see the need to require a teaching degree in order to school our children. Parents of homeschoolers are often times labors, farmers and business owners who have never completed a college education. This should not disqualify them from properly educating their children, or discount them as less able.

Please do your part to vote no to the SF1311 bill and uphold laws that support parents who choose homeschool to provide rich learning environments for their children to flourish without the burdens that have no proven value for improving student outcomes.

Kind regards,

Becky Niznik

25474 123rd Street

Pierz, MN 56364

Good Morning Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Amee Gallagher and I wanted to speak to you all today regarding the bill HF1269. My background includes a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Music Education with a MN K-12 Music Teaching license as well as a graduate degree in Piano as well as post-graduate work overseas.

My husband and I have four children, ages 11 and under, whom we homeschool. One of these four children has a rare chromosomal abnormality which has required years of therapy for her.

I have read the bill you submitted and I strongly oppose certain parts of it.

In Section 1, line 3, you have removed the section that teachers have to successfully complete a teacher competency examination.

Furthermore, you have added, in regards to standardized testing for students, that "a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation..."

In the early 2000,'s, I was the first graduating class to have to pass a teacher competency exam in order to be granted a MN teaching license. The fact that you want to remove this requirement and then require all students, including homeschoolers, to submit their standardized test scores is very disconcerting.

Currently, as it stands, it is quite easy for parents to opt their child out of the standardized testing requirements in the public school system. They have to submit a half sheet of paper that includes basic information such as your name, address, school, district, and a line where you can state why you're choosing to refuse. If homeschooled students want to opt out, the only option is to have their parents go through the long, tedious process of having their homeschool accredited. This process includes a mission statement/educational philosophy/lifetime goals, school calendar/daily schedule/grading scale, an educational plan for each subject and student, site inspection/photos, along with submitting fees and quarterly reports and evaluations. Many homeschoolers, including our family, already have a lot of these plans in place but it's the government wanting more control over what we teach and how we teach it that is concerning to us. Again, this is not the freedom we seek when we choose to homeschool. I strongly encourage you to take out the part of the bill that states that homeschoolers need to submit their standardized test scores.

In addition, I strongly oppose the newly added language in Section 16, Subd. 3,(a) that states "An eligible institution must not require a faith statement during the application process or base any part of the admission decision on a student's race, creed, ethnicity, disability, gender, or sexual orientation or religious beliefs or affiliations." It states that this includes private institutions. I believe that requiring private, faith-based schools, to not have the option to include a faith statement during the application process is not allowing them their full right to exercise their freedom of religion. What would be the difference of someone like me, a teacher, having to submit a statement of diversity for any teaching position and a private, Christian school requiring potential students to submit a statement of faith? Currently, post-secondary institutions and public schools both require teaching philosophy statements along with diversity statements in their applications for teaching positions and entrance into teaching programs. How is this different? Again, I strongly encourage you to remove this language and allow schools to have the choice on whether or not to require statements of faith.

Thank you for your service and the time you have allowed me to voice my concerns.

Kindest regards,

Amee Gallagher

February 6, 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing about [HF1269](#). As a homeschooling father, and father of three, I am deeply concerned about this bill. Parents are in charge of their children, not the government. This language makes homeschooling harder for families and districts. It is unnecessary paperwork for all that will likely never be reviewed. This is one that "sounds good on the surface" but, when thought about, actually undermines freedoms and steals independence from families. Freedom is the foundation of our country. Respectfully, I request that you oppose this bill on arrival.

This is the language about which I have concerns:

(1) a copy of the actual test scores sent from the testing provider of the annual nationally normed achievement test from the previous school year, unless exempt from the testing because of school accreditation;

(2) evidence that any protocols agreed to with the superintendent's office were followed; and

(3) any changes to the information required in paragraph (a) for each student.

(c) The superintendent may collect the required information under this section through an electronic or web-based format, but must not require electronic submission of information under this section from the person in charge of reporting under this subdivision.

Respectfully, I would like this bill and this language removed. It does not represent me. This is unnecessary, at the least, and on a practical level, undermines freedoms in the state of Minnesota.

Pete Zepelak

Pequot Lakes, MN

Madam Chair and members of the committee, thank you for taking time to read my testimony.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Did you know that based on studies homeschooled children actually perform significantly better than their public School peers? According to a study by Brian Ray, the national homeschool reading score is in the 89 percentile and the public school score is just at the 50th percentile! Most studies find that homeschooled children tend to have higher college GPAs than children from public schools and better college graduation rates.

Homeschool parents are able to provide customized education for each child. We stay on a subject until it is mastered. We're able to spend more time nurturing a child's love for learning. It has enhanced all aspects of my childrens' lives and provides a much safer learning environment free from physical violence, drugs, alcohol, psychological abuse, bullying, racism, and unhealthy sexuality associated with public schools.

Homeschoolers solidly score 15 to 30 percentile points above their public school peers. They perform higher regardless of their parents' level of formal education or income! There are no documented cases of increased government regulations actually increasing homeschool academic achievement. Homeschooled children already score higher on ACT and SATs tests and they are being actively recruited by colleges.

Homeschoolers are not being abused or educationally deprived or maltreated. On the contrary, research suggests rates of abuse are significantly lower among homeschoolers than institutionally schooled children. Public school parents can opt out of all testing, while homeschooled parents are forced to test. Before this last election the teachers were all saying that Minnesota's abysmal test scores were not a good indicator of achievement. For example, according to the Minnesota report card my school district of Pine Island has math, reading, and science scores hovering between the 50 to 60 percentile! Is that what we want to aspire for our children? My homeschooled children all scored between 85 to 95th percentile on all of those subjects.

Maybe instead of trying to regulate homeschoolers more you should be focusing on the true educational crisis that you created: public schooling! Please stay out of my home and my children's education. Believe me when I say that I care exponentially more than anyone else! Again, if it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Thank you,
Meghan Hewitt
Pine Island, MN

Wilson Lee,

My name is Adrian Keister; I live in Rochester, MN, and I am writing to protest bill HF1269.

My wife and I homeschool our children, and we have consistently found that when the state's homeschooling laws are more restrictive, more intrusive, our homeschooling suffers. There are even states to which we would never consider moving (if the need arose) because their homeschooling laws are too burdensome. We need the freedom to teach our children what we believe they need. We don't co-parent with the government.

This law would require us to report standardized testing scores to the local school system. The local school systems don't even want this to happen, because they don't have the employees to look at the records!

We have our children take certain tests, and we use the scores from those tests to inform our schooling choices. The state has no business muscling in on what we are doing.

I strongly urge the Education Policy Committee never to let this bill see the light of day!

Regards,
Adrian Keister, Ph.D.