

My name is Carol Bouchie and I am writing to communicate my strong opposition to House File 874. The proposed language of the amendment invites a host of future problems for both families and our state.

HF874 New Constitutional Language Proposed:

“All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education that fully prepares them with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, as measured against uniform achievement standards set forth by the state. It is a paramount duty of the state to ensure quality public schools that fulfill this fundamental right.”

“All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education...”

A “quality public education” may not be the best education for “all children.” There are times when more one-on-one instruction is necessary for a student, at a slower pace, and other times when less instruction is necessary, but rather the opportunity for the student to spread their wings and go on ahead at a faster pace. The public school is limited in monitoring and accommodating the needs of every unique student at their unique pace in every subject. Different school settings, such as private school or homeschool (or other options), may be better suited to the student’s needs.

“...skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, as measured against uniform achievement standards set forth by the state.”

“Uniform achievement standards” do not necessarily translate into an individual being prepared for participation in our economy or society. An individual’s ability to contribute to society is not determined by their standardized test scores, but rather by the whole person, including their moral character, convictions, and integrity. To measure a person by “uniform achievement standards” is overly simplistic and misleading.

“...It is a paramount duty of the state to ensure quality public schools that fulfill this fundamental right.”

It is not the state’s duty to educate my child. It is my duty, as a parent, to choose the best educational environment for my child. We have friends and family with children in a variety of school environments, both public and non-public, and believe parents have chosen the education that is best suited for their children. Each child is unique, with different strengths and abilities, both academically and otherwise. Given the fact that no two students are identical, it is obvious that the same learning environment will not work for all students.

I am a homeschool mom of seven years, with children whose test scores are well above grade level. In the last year, our homeschool has provided consistent quality education, whereas the public schools have been scrambling to meet the educational needs of their students, while endeavoring to accommodate the ever-changing mandates, recommendations, and guidelines. I would venture to say that most families would not call the last 12 months “quality public education.” Many families have opted to pull their students out of public school, because they want something better for their children than a “quality public education.”

Every family must have the right to choose what is the best educational option for their child, whether it be public, private, homeschool, or otherwise.

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