

Testimony For: Minnesota Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee

From: Lynette Cudnik

Date: Saturday, March 6, 2021

Re: Testimony in Opposition to HF874

Dear House Committee Members,

I am writing in regard to HF874, which is proposing an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution to state that “all children have a fundamental right to a quality *public* education” as measured by “uniform standards set forth by the state”. I have a few questions and concerns regarding this proposed amendment to the Constitution.

- Does not every child currently have a right to a public education, in so far as every child living in MN can receive a public education if his/her parents choose to send him/her to the local public school? No public school can deny a child within its district access to the education provided at the school, therefore fulfilling the child’s right to an education. In short, this amendment does not seem necessary.
- Using the specific wording of “public education”, it seems to exclude other forms of education, such as private schools and homeschools. Could this amendment, in the future, be interpreted to limit parents to only allowing their children to receive a public education? Would parents be withholding a “right to a public education” if they choose to homeschool, or send their child to a private school?
- I am concerned that specifically defining education in MN to “public,” could take away the rights parents have as primary educators of their children. It would then hand the education rights of children over to the state. The state, rather than the parents, would be deciding the best school for the child.
- Finally, in the midst of a pandemic which has forced parents to school their children at home, it seems in the best interest of parents for the state to provide them with *more* options for their child’s education, not less.

Thank you for your time,

Lynette Cudnik