

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 320
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my serious concern regarding the proposed changes to the Education Act. As a stakeholder in the homeschooling community, it is imperative we engage in a conversation as amendments to this Act will have a direct impact on the current and future homeschooling community.

There are two aspects I would like to draw your attention to, based on the 13 years I've been home educating. I have two children, one has become a successful Early Childhood Educator and Educator in charge at only 19 years-old and the other is 10 with additional needs and diagnosis that require a more thoughtful approach to his education. With this in mind, I trust you will consider my experience and understand my concern for these proposed changes.

1. The more concerning to me is the proposed change to Clause 18 Section 7. Adding into legislation that home education is to be provided in a way that is in the best interest of the child is a slippery slope and has me further questioning, who decides and on what merits will it be considered the best interest of a child. The understanding that parents know what is best for their child is well established, even in the medical field, so how does the Government propose to undertake the enormous task of knowing every child and what is best for them. This is dangerous overreach of power and I urge the committee to remove this from the proposal immediately.
2. Mandating adherence to a standardized curriculum without understanding or considering the situations in which families may choose to not follow it, is misguided. You may not be aware of a 2022 research report collected by the Home Education Unit which found that 2/3 families chose to homeschool due to underlying disability or health issue. We are one of those families. The consequences of mandating this proposal would have direct negative mental and physical implications for my child and many of the other 1000's of

homeschoolers across the State. It's crucial that you understand the reasons why homeschooling is often chosen by families and the quality education they already receive rather than mandating a one size fits all approach.

Rather than imposing stricter regulations, I urge the committee to protect homeschooling students and families and prioritize understanding the root causes of homeschooling as well as the positive impacts it has on the community at large. This entails listening to and implementing the feedback from homeschooling parents, who are directly impacted by legislative changes. Our insights and experiences are invaluable in shaping effective policies that support the diverse needs of families while ensuring the well-being and educational success of our children.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response regarding my concerns.

Thank you.