

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Submitter Comments:

I would like to express my deep concern regarding the recent education legislation changes that have been proposed in this bill which would force home school families to follow the national curriculum instead of having the freedom to choose curriculum, based on a wide variety of reasons. The national curriculum is designed to be taught in a school environment by educators trained for years in successfully delivering it. Home school educators are not teaching in a school environment. Instead they have the freedom to teach their children literacy, numeracy and a range of subjects based on a program designed to fit the individual child's needs. Home school educators care desperately about their children's education and well being and tailor their educational program to meet their own children's needs, be it the times of learning, the topics, the style of education or other needs such as neurodiversity. It would devalue the qualification of the qualified teachers if you suggest that home educators should follow the curriculum exactly. Instead I implore you to recognise the value of both methods within their own settings. The national curriculum taught at home may well hold our children back. When my child was in school, he was very advanced in mathematics. We were told that he was not allowed to be taught topics for years ahead of his current year. We were told he is only allowed to be recognised for one book a week, even if he'd read more as some other parents complained. It may also hold them back as they are not engaged in the topics. If a child is told he must learn one section of history, but wants to learn another, as that is his or her passion, they are still learning history and they are fully engaged in the learning which is not something schools are often able to achieve. Not everyone has to learn exactly the same thing for a society to be successful. Teachers teach a topic in school and then give the children an assessment on that topic. It is the case however, that if that child gets a low grade, they do not stop and spend time reteaching that topic in a different way. Instead they move on as they must keep pace with the curriculum for the class as a whole. This can mean that children are left behind in their learning. With homeschool, we have the freedom to pause, to learn at the child's pace. We can stop and find new ways to teach the child the topic. We can do that in a way that is supportive and when they are ready, we can continue our programs. Just because we are not following the curriculum does not mean that our children are not learning deeply, and from a rich range of topics that are valuable to the child. Following the national curriculum may well impact the learning of the child in other ways. For example, when my child first homeschooled, he was interested in crystals and geology. Once a week we joined a lapidary club, during school hours. My son learned this skill. He learned through friendships with the other members, all elderly which helped his communication skills, they read books on the topic, he learned chemistry through the chemicals they used, he learned lab safety through the procedures, he learned so much more because he was interested and passionate about the topic. He learned in his own way. But he learned. To dismiss this and say he needs to be learning something else from someone who has never met him or seen his passion seems ridiculous. Please understand that I am married to a school teacher who does not take part in educating our child, but recognises the benefits and achievements of our homeschooling and is very happy for it to continue. I am in my seventh year of homeschooling my child and he is advanced for his age in mathematics and continues to make firm progress in all other areas. We prove this every year with an inspection from the department. I understand that there may be cases where a homeschool program does not meet those requirements and is rejected, but it is a small percentage and help is given and taken or the child returns to school. Please do not punish homeschoolers as a whole for that, especially given that certainly not all school children are leaving regular schools with good levels of education. You can not promise that the national curriculum works all the time, it is

simply not the case and in many cases is helping to produce bored, disengaged learners, the opposite of what we want for our children. I am also worried about the lack of transparency and public consultation surrounding these changes. As a stakeholder in our education system, I believe it is imperative for the voices of educators, parents, students, and community members to be heard and considered in any decision-making process that impacts our schools. In light of these concerns, I urge you to carefully reconsider the proposed education legislation and to prioritize the best interests of our students, teachers, and schools. I implore you to advocate for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to policymaking that values input from all stakeholders and ensures the integrity and quality of our education system. Thank you for taking the time to read my submission and for considering my concerns.