

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1241
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Submitter Comments:

Dear Committee Members, Firstly, I would like to say that I am neither anti-school nor pro-homeschool; but a parent who over two decades ago, choose the latter for my children's education. Having watched them grow into functional adults, I am proud of what they have achieved, with both attaining postgraduate qualifications in their chosen areas of interest. However, I was disheartened to hear about the proposed changes in homeschooling legislation, particularly the requirements to follow a specific curriculum. Although I personally no longer have children of school age, I am aware that in this fast-changing world with new challenges, there are many families who are now choosing this mode of education. Their reasons for doing so would be varied and diverse, but I am certain that taking on this task is never done lightly. Understandably and dependant on the individual child, both learning environments can have their downfalls/merits, and negative/positive outcomes. My reasons to homeschool was not to shun traditional educational institutions, or to be alternative or different, but simply because in my circumstances I could see the benefits of homeschooling... such as: Having the freedom to explore topics that sparked my children's curiosity. Pursuing knowledge and learning in a way that resonated with them personally. Having more flexible options, rather than outdated and irrelevant curriculum. Providing personalised learning experiences which went way beyond mere academic achievements.

I believe that our journey is proof that being free to choose how we educate our children is our parental right. Opposed to enforcing rigid educational requirement that might contribute to depriving children of pursuing their passions and developing their full potential. Enforcing more rules is not a complementary approach towards supporting homeschooling families who provide relief to an already overcrowded education system. Stricter regulations only imply that parents are not capable of choosing how or what they might see fit to teach their children; and that they cannot be trusted to nurture, advise, guide, and foster their child's learning. To insist that there is only one suitable curriculum or set of learning tools and only certain things to learn at certain age levels, is outdated and misguided. The world has changed, given the existing accessibility and diverse approaches to a multitude of learning platforms, courses, and curriculum resources. Homeschooling parents shouldn't be a concern to the education department. Their children aren't being depriving of learning opportunities, in fact it's the exact opposite. This new regulation overlooks the fact that every child is unique and may thrive or even excel when subjects are presented differently. In conclusion, I urge the committee to not take away parents and children's rights to learn and develop their full potential in their own way. Also, it is important to note that homeschool families already have access to the curriculum ... but this should be a choice to utilise some, part, all, or none of it in their educational approach, and not mandatory. Thank you for considering my concerns on this important issue. Baiba Jeffrey