

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1367
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Submitter Comments:

I do NOT agree with nor support the proposed changes. My main opposition is to the requirement to prove that home education is in the best interest of the child and to the compulsory use of the national curriculum. I am an engineer who has made a career change to become a secondary maths and science teacher and my wife is also an engineer. We have decided to homeschool our children because we are responsible for all aspects of their lives and we want to provide them with the best education possible. We strongly believe that this will be achieved through homeschooling and our personal experiences have strengthened this belief. Our son has a disability and we started his schooling in a private school, but they were unable to satisfactorily accommodate his needs. We switched to a state school, which had more resources and was better equipped to deal with these types of needs, however, it did not work out either. When he started prep, he loved school and couldn't wait to go each day, but over time the experience became increasingly more negative and he started to dread going. It was causing a significant negative impact on his education as well as his mental and emotional well-being and was creating a very stressful home environment for the whole family. Since switching both of our children to homeschooling they are thriving. They are eager to learn and are enjoying it, we have more quality family time together and they participate in more community events, sports, and activities. We can provide them with individual (one-on-one), personalised instruction in every single lesson, work at the exact pace best suited to them, and provide the relevant differentiation and resources to meet their individual needs. This is vastly superior to what they would receive in a school with 30 - 40 students in a class. One major benefit of homeschooling is the ability to adapt the curriculum to students' individual needs and it enables them to thrive in both their education and well-being. Forcing the use of a single curriculum is the complete opposite of providing an individualised, needs-based education and I strongly believe that it is a step in the wrong direction. In regards to homeschooling being in the best interest of the child, I strongly believe that this is the responsibility of the parents to decide and not the government or any other individual. I also do not like the loose definition and wording as it is open to interpretation and therefore, vulnerable to misuse. What does "best interest" entail? Who will decide this? How will they have more knowledge about the child, their needs, interests, well-being, etc than the parent? Are there going to be costs involved? Is it going to mean an additional administrative burden on parents? Is it only going to be in the "best interests" of children with disabilities? I am especially concerned about my daughter because she does not have a disability. Does this mean that homeschooling is not in her best interest? If so, why not?