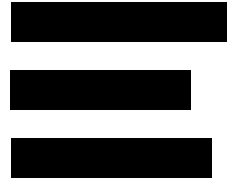


Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Mrs. Margaret Telford, Acting Committee Secretary
Education, Employment, Training and skills Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000



Dear Mrs. Telford,

I watched the online broadcast of the public briefing - Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendments Bill 2024 on March 18 2024. As a current homeschool family, I found some points very valid, however there were certain aspects regarding the proposed changes to homeschooling that raised deep concerns for me. Before delving into specifics, I believe its important to explain why we chose to home educate, a point, I felt was overlooked during the briefing. I would also like to request that my personal information such as my name, address, and any details pertaining to children, not be made public or published online please.

My son completed his first 4 and a half years of education in a traditional schooling environment. He loved the social aspects of being there but always struggled with the rest. Sadly it didn't take long before he started to slip through the cracks. His attitude and behavior became his teachers only focus and his education was pushed aside as he was labeled "too difficult to bother with". My son has no learning difficulties or diagnosable issues, therefore he was not allowed to receive any extra assistance and his English skills suffered greatly. Since having him home and learning one on one in the home environment, he is now reading and writing at his age level and has just started doing a math's course aimed at a grade higher then his current level. He is a strong willed and confident boy who possesses high self awareness and has come leaps and bounds since he began to learn at home.

I also wish to add a quick story; my sons grade 1 teacher was replaced after the first term due to having a mental breakdown from all the children in her class and their different needs. She was unable to deal with it. Her replacement was a lady in her

mid 50's straight out of university and this lady took an instant disliking towards my son. She bullied him and belittled him. He reverted back to bed wetting and began therapy inside the school and outside. My son spent close to 6 months spending every minute he was at school in his guidance counselor's office because it was the only place he felt safe. After many meetings about her and one day catching her grab my son by the back of the neck, she was let go. It took me well over a year to get my sweet funny boy back to his normal self after such a horrible experience.

I chose to keep my daughter at home for the very reasons I took my son out of traditional school, I was not going to allow her to be lost in a system not designed for her. She has always been a bright and confident child and I truly believe that this would change if she was forced to do what everyone else was doing. In saying that, at the age of 6 she can read and is doing grade 2 mathematics problems. Her social skills are beyond advanced and she can uphold conversations with adults with no difficulty. In her extra-curricular activities she has skipped age levels twice in the past 6 months. She thrives in her home environment and is learning everything she needs to and more.

The year of 2020 was a turning point as I finally was able to see how far behind my son was academically and I decided to do something about it. With that being said, I did not "jump on the bandwagon" due to social media or any other speculative reasons stated in the public hearing on the 18th March 2024. This decision was made by myself and my husband and only had our son's best interests at the forefront of this choice. The proposed legislation raises several concerns that I believe need to be addressed.

- The proposed amendments concerning home schooling lack clarity, particularly regarding the procedure for home visits. It would be advisable to conduct a review of these changes and provide explicit guidelines on the conduct and process of such visits. The insufficient information regarding these visits raises many questions regarding how these checks will be carried out. Offering detailed information could help address any concerns within the home schooling community.

- The section regarding the best interests of the child within the legislation changes appear overly ambiguous to me, potentially leading to a hasty reaction. My concerns stem from the fact that there is only one documented case where homeschooling was implicated in a Child's death, and that child had pre-existing mental health issues (as detailed in the Child Death Review Board Annual Report 2022-2023). Here it also states that there was suspected child abuse and neglect happening within that household and child protective services had not acted upon that, despite them being aware of the issues and some time prior to the Child's death. I find myself questioning this as a massive failure within the child protection services procedures and legislations, rather than an education issue.
- The elimination of Provisional registration could have detrimental effects on many families for many reasons. The main one of which would be for family in abuse situations. These families rely on the provision registration to allow themselves to quickly leave abusing situations and keep their children safe. If you take this process away then this could have detrimental implications for these families who may find it that all more difficult to leave abusive environments and potentially harming themselves and the children in the process. Provisional registration plays a very important part in helping families with their choices.
- Proposed changes stating that we as home educators must follow an approved national curriculum is not the way forward. Only 20% of the current homeschooling community use a national curriculum, leaving 80% who don't. I ask, how does a minority become more important? the national curriculum failed my son. The current system within schools is a one size fits all and this approach has proven over and over again that many students do not fit this box. Forcing them into it is going to create children who are withdrawn, emotionally isolated and lacking the skills and confidence to become good honest people in society.

I find the proposed amendments in the - Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendments Bill 2024, discussed online on March 18, 2024, to be quite vague. In conclusion, I advocate for further investigation, discussion and research into various aspects of this legislation. I believe both the public system and the home education system could greatly benefit and improve through such efforts.