

Testimony in Senate Education on H.461 - home study changes  
March 28, 2023

Hello << Test First Name >> ,

First, please let any homeschoolers you know that they can sign up for this email list and get any news on legislation in a timely manner. <https://vhen.org/email-list>

I presented testimony to the Senate Ed committee on March 28, 2023. They were running late so I had about 10 minutes which was enough time to say what I needed to say.

After a brief introduction on homeschooling, I then presented them with 6 points about the language of the bill that homeschoolers had questions about. You can read those points at the end of this email. The first 3 points the Agency of Ed has already told me they were ok with those changes. The last three I was told we were not far apart but that they still had to review them. The committee will have the AOE in to testify as well.

So, I am hopeful but not so hopeful that we can rest easy. The legislature must be watched closely from now on as these bills can change fast at the end of a session. And then once the bill passes in the Senate, there is a joint committee between House Ed and Senate Ed that must agree to all the changes made in Senate Ed before it goes to the Governor. A lot can happen in that process.

No action from the homeschooling community to Senate Ed is needed at this time.

Also, it is too early and risky to ask your local legislators to support H.461. It is not even on their radar unless they are in one of the Ed committees. We do not yet know what this bill will look like at the end of the process. You can let them know it is in the pipeline and if it stays about the same as it is, you like what you are reading ... provided you actually do like what you are reading, of course. :)

Feel free to email or call me with any questions you may have.

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[You can watch my testimony here.](#) It is in the first 11 minutes of the video.

[You can read what I submitted here.](#)

To follow the suggested changes below, you will need the official bill as passed by the House with page/line numbers on it. [You will find that bill here.](#) The home study section starts on page 4.

**Here are the 6 points I made:**

1. Page 4 line 20. The new language talks about two different types of notices that parents are to submit. One is an 'enrollment notice' or 'notice of intent to enroll' found in section (a) and then there is the annual notice found in section (k). Unfortunately, the word annual is found in section (a) as well as section (k) so the word 'annual' needs to be removed in section (a) for clarity. The intent is to submit a complete enrollment notice once, it is like an affidavit, and then to confirm each year to the Sec of Ed, by an annual notice, that the family will continue homeschooling under the enrollment notice found in section (a).

2. Page 5 line 15-16. Many homeschoolers are concerned about how the standardized testing option is worded as it needs to be clearer as to who can administer it. I suggest we borrow a phrase from the current statute to add to the current language of the bill at the end of line 16: "or administered in a manner approved by the testing company".

3. Page 5 line 20. Does the agency mean the parent portfolio should ONLY have 4 samples or it should have 4 samples per the subject area mentioned in section (5) (A) and (B)?

4. Page 6 line 15-17. The bill says "each child .... will be provided the equivalent of at least 175 days of instruction in the minimum course of study". The words "per year" should be added after the word study, so that it is clear it is per year and NOT per 'school year' as that has a different meaning that correlates to what the public schools do.

5. Page 13 line 3. About the annual notice. I do not know if this is necessary but some homeschoolers have brought it up nor do I know how to word this. The phrase "on or before the start of each following year" means what? Homeschooling does not always follow the public-school year from September to June. Some homeschoolers go year-round with different vacation schedules. Some start their school year in January, others in June. So, what does "each following year" mean? Does that year start 12 months after the enrollment notice was submitted? Or is this annual notice due in the fall of each public-school year? Could this be clarified somewhat? Or is this to be determined by the agency after passage?

6. Page 14 line 20. Lastly, will this law become fully applied on July 1st? In other words, last year families enrolled under the old 166b and after July 1st families that enroll will not have to submit an end of year assessment to "complete the AOE's filing system"? I would prefer the new law become effective upon the Governor's signature in that they do not have to hand in a course of study OR an assessment for enrollment in 2023 forward. Is the wording sufficient to cover a complete turn over in the law this year?

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