

ALERT to VT homeschooling community 1/29/23 – home study legislation is on the horizon. Please forward to this to all homeschoolers and groups you know.

For those of you who do not know who I am, my name is Retta Dunlap, a retired homeschooling mom of 4 and statewide homeschool advocate for Vermont Home Education Network www.vhen.org. I have been watching over this statute at the state level for over 25 years and worked with then Com. Cate on statutory changes in 2006 to 166b. I go to the State House every now and then just to let them know homeschoolers are watching them and I am known in the state house for homeschooling issues. Well, the past 10 days have been busy. I have been there 3 times.

On 1/18/2023, the AOE submitted proposed changes to 166b the Home Study statute. The proposal is the same concept that they presented to homeschoolers in January of 2022. You can read the AOE language on VHEN website here: <https://vhen.org/20232024-legislative-biennium> and can also read supporting documentation as well as my testimony.

I do support the concept that the AOE is presenting and the language they are putting forth is in line with that concept, as well as what they suggested a year ago – that of reducing burdensome and unnecessary paper work. The devil is always in the detail and time will tell if we can actually support the language. It all depends the legislative process is messy at best.

Hang on to the above link on VHEN's website, as it will be where VHEN collects all the activity of the House Ed committee concerning this language. This language will not have its own bill number as the AOE is putting it in the Miscellaneous Ed bill as a procedural change for the Agency. This is preferable to an actual bill. I have learned it works better at the State House if the AOE suggests the changes. COVID really shined a light on the process and that it is not sustainable if the numbers of homeschoolers increase. The AOE wants out from under all the paper work! This has worked to our advantage.

NO ACTION by homeschoolers to the House Ed committee is needed right now. They have not done anything yet and are just gathering information. We do not want to exhaust them with emails and calls just yet, unless they try to do things we do not like. I did testify in committee on 1/27/23 and told them we are watching and are interested in simplification of the law i.e. getting rid of most of the burdensome paper work.

IF YOU WANT to contact someone, contact your own Representative to let them know you are interested and watching as well and that you support simplification of the statute and less burdensome paper work. It is the CONCEPT we need to support right now, not the language as that can change in a blink of an eye.

Next week, I will be talking with the AOE General Council Emily Simmons and Sec Dan French about this language. When I have done so I will report back how those conversations went. I want to know what their next steps are.

You may call me or email me if you have any questions. The legislative process is a messy process and you really need boots on the ground to follow what the committee doing. I am also trying to set up a Homeschoolers Day at the State House for the beginning of April. More information on that to come later.

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