

**Vermont Home Education Network**

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

April 13, 2023

Hello,

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**Early afternoon, April 12th**, I spoke with Emily Simmons, the AOE lawyer who is working on the home study legislation from the AOE. We are both still on the same page about the wording of the legislation. It is Emily that the committee had scheduled to testify on the 12th at 4 pm.

So, while I was in the State House waiting for that testimony, I was sitting in a lovely window seat in the lobby happily reading a book ... they rescheduled it. I know to keep checking the committee agenda document as those agendas can get changed on the fly. And this one did. Home I went not accomplishing my goals for the day.

Regrettably, the testimony before Emily was about the independent schools and was running over, so Emily will be rescheduled for some time next week. Senate Ed needs to get the independent school legislation out of committee so it is taking priority. That tells me that the misc. ed bill is just not that important. That is fine by me. They have not changed the language yet and will look to Emily to answer their questions next week.

There is nothing to do but wait. I am in a holding pattern. Enjoy your weekend and I will check back in with the next installment of this grand adventure. This is just the way the legislative process works.

**For those of you who do not know who I am ...** First, I am not a lawyer but there is one law I know very well and that is 166b both its legislative intent and history. Second, I have been watching over it for 25+ years now. Every time the legislature has tried to change it - I show up and ask them what they are trying to do. One time, about 15 years ago, the AOE tried to make testing mandatory for home study students. That ended the moment I showed up in the committee room as my email campaign had swamped their email inboxes before I got there. The AOE said they talked with 10 homeschoolers and that this was ok with them. One Senator noted that while the AOE may have talked with 10 homeschoolers - judging by his inbox Retta knew the rest of them and they did NOT like mandatory testing.

THAT is how a properly timed email campaign can make a difference. My philosophy in sending out an alert to contact legislators is that it must be strategic, specific, timely, and needed. There is nothing worse than an email campaign that is not really needed or is not focused on one message.

**Still, we are not out of the woods yet.**

I am grateful for your efforts to homeschool your children. It is truly amazing! I am now a retired homeschooling mom and there are times when I miss it.

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