

Testimony on SB291
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SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 27
DATE 2-14-05
BILL NO. SB-291

Mister Chairman, members of the Committee;

The saints gathered at Covenant Community Church of Whitehall greet you in the name and by the authority of He who raises up men and empires and He who brings them low, He who calls us and you to faithful obedience to his holy commands - Jesus Christ, King and Lord over all.

Covenant Community Church oversees The Education Station which is a community center for home schooling families. We have served families from Helena, Bozeman, Missoula, Butte and the entire Jefferson Valley. Together with the many support groups and loosely confederated home school organizations we reach out to anyone desiring a better future for their children. These are the families and these are the works that this legislation threatens. Those few who are failing in their responsibilities toward their children will not for the most part appear on the school district radar screen. This is a case of shooting at the elephant in hopes of hitting the flea. Many in the home school community fear that the real agenda here is to secularize that which they hold to as sacred.

We being mindful of the great work of salvation wrought by God through Jesus Christ on our behalf, recognize the Bible as our highest authority concerning the governance of our lives in every sphere and in all matters relating to this life and the life to come. We hear and practice the command of our Lord to pray for civil rulers so that we may lead peaceable lives in the fear of the Lord.

The scriptures are replete with commands to parents regarding the training and education of their children. The law-book wherein we find these commands is the same one wherein we find commands to "love our neighbors", give to those in need and yes fulfill our duties in regard to the civil rulers. We note that God nowhere gives to the civil government the duty or the authority to "educate" children. Where God does not grant authority NONE exists. Any attempt to acquire it otherwise is lawlessness and usurpation. It is an attempt to overthrow the order that God has set in place. This is no small matter to those of us who are bound to the obedience of Christ. For this body to put into place laws that "require" parents to subordinate the training and education of their children to the state is to create for Christian parents an impossible dilemma - obey Christ our Lord and King or obey the "law of the state".

The very form of government that our fathers established on this continent was born out of a resistance to just such measures. Such contests are rarely resolved without great harm and danger. History teaches us that governments trample upon the conscience of godly men at their own peril for God himself vindicates the cause of righteous men. It is not our intention to impugn the character or the motives of this body. It needs be remembered however that good men with bad ideas are very often the greatest threat to the peace, liberty and well-being of the people.

For those whose heartfelt concern is for children that are being neglected or abused by their parents or custodians, the saints at Whitehall will join you and others to pray and work for their betterment. We have demonstrated this by our works. We urge you to reject Senate Bill 291, but, more than that you will humbly recognize and submit to the wise order that God has established, and thereby serve the people of the great State of Montana in a manner consistent with the truth which produces the blessings of peace, liberty and prosperity.