SENATE EDUCATION
EXHIBIT NO. 38
DATE 2-14-05
BILL NO. SB-291

Feb. 14, 2005

Secretary's copy

Dear ~~Senator Ryan~~:

The joy of learning is a natural innate characteristic in all children. No one tells a child to be curious about the world. They just are naturally curious and always learning. No one tells a baby when to walk or when to talk. Some babies walk at nine months and some babies not until 14 months. Yet, when you see a playground full of little children playing, can you tell who walked at nine months and who walked at 14 months and what is more, does it matter?

But when little children reach the age of 5 or 6, suddenly they are no longer individuals. As they enter institutionalized schooling, their learning is expected to conform to an arbitrary, dictated schedule. Everyone must learn the same thing at the same time and in the same way.

This method is contemptuous of children. It does not respect the individual and their natural right to learn in their own time and in their own way. It is not the avenue to a real education. Conventional assumptions can be very rigid. The system of government schooling is based upon the conventional assumption that schooling and education are the same thing. They are not.

I removed my two older children from the school system over ten years ago precisely so they would no longer be subjected to the irrational, illogical, anti-child and anti-learning environment of institutionalized schooling. My experience as a classroom teacher, a special education teacher and a parent of school children proved to me the negative effects that institutionalized schooling has on the child's mental, social and emotional development.

SB 291 requires that home educated children would be tested according to the conventional model of schooling. This means that we must alter our own learning and education goals and teach to the test. Tests based on conventional schooling are not relevant to the individualized atmosphere of the home school. None of my four children learned to read at the same time. Yet, they are all doing very well. The oldest will complete a five year accounting program (in four years), the next started college at 17 studying Italian and vocal performance. The younger two are still at home. None of them would fit the conventional model.

As one who has a college degree and had a teacher's license, I can also testify that these "qualifications" of a degree and/or a license have absolutely no relevance to home educating my own children. The section of the bill requiring such qualifications or oversight by a licensed teacher is extremely discriminatory and unenlightened. No one is more concerned for their children's happiness and success than the parents. A "qualified" home school parent is one who loves their children and loves learning, which would describe every home school parent that I know.

This bill is not about education. It is about government control based upon conventional, erroneous assumptions about schooling. Real learning is wholly individual. It cannot be accurately measured by standardized testing. No one ever grew by being measured.

We home educate for educational freedom. America needs more educational freedom not less. Please do not set back the progress we have made. I urge you to vote no on SB291. Thank you.

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