

SENATE EDUCATION

EXHIBIT NO. 57

DATE 2-14-05

BILL NO. SB-291

February 14, 2005

David and Rebecca Wysoski
652 Springhill Lane
Bozeman, MT 59715

RE: SB291

To The Senate Education Committee:

We have home schooled our two children for the last seven years. My wife taught elementary education for nine years in a Catholic school in Minnesota and one year in Montana. We are Catholic and choose to home school our children using an accredited program, Seton Home Study, that has almost 11,000 students currently enrolled in it.

In our estimation, home schooling is successful with our current laws. The changes proposed by SB291 are unnecessary and burdensome. Though my wife is an elementary education teacher, there is no evidence that supports the need for the parent to be a certified teacher. We personally know of a family that has six children whose mother has home schooled her children for 18 years and does not have a teaching degree. Two of her children are currently Montana State University students who are doing quite well in college. In fact, their professors have commented on their outstanding abilities to articulate their ideas! Currently, there are truancy laws that can be enforced if a parent is suspected of not home schooling. Why not use these laws instead of adding more laws? The idea of being monitored by certified teachers is going to be costly and burdensome besides unnecessary.

Studies have shown that increased state oversight of home schooling does not result in higher academic achievement. In our experience of teaching two children, they get a lot of individual attention. If some part of the curriculum is difficult to understand we are immediately aware of it and can take the time to teach the concept until it is grasped. This is impossible to do in a large classroom . . . ask any teacher! There is no educational basis for requiring a student scoring below the 30th percentile on a standardized achievement test to be evaluated for a learning disability! My wife can attest to the fact that some of her best students scored low on some of those tests due to fear, sickness, distraction. The quick fix of a standardized test is not the answer.

One of the things that is most upsetting is the discrimination in this bill against the special needs child! If anyone can benefit from home schooling, it certainly would be the special needs child! To be at home in their own environment, to not be in a situation where they may be teased and tortured because they are "different," to have one-on-one attention . . . what could be more helpful to a student in that situation? It is not our right to take away the parent's right to educate their child if they so choose. We personally know of a very committed family who is home schooling their special needs child and is having GREAT success. As a mother who intuitively knows her child she has come up with some educational strategies that would baffle the

professionals. The dedication she and her husband have to their own child's well-being and success is incredible. To take this away from them and their child is unthinkable! Please strike this part of the bill!

Thank you for your time and for serving on this special committee. Please vote no to SB291.

Sincerely,

David Wysoski *Rebecca Wysoski*

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