

Dear Minnesota State Legislators,

I strongly oppose this amendment. It is a significant change to our state constitution saying, “**All** children have a fundamental **right** to a quality **public** education...,” which includes *our* children by any rational reading. It is measuring quality by the politicized state standards. Our right to homeschool was established under the current constitutional language. Therefore, *any* change to the state constitution sets up a new round of court cases, undermining the rights that for the past thirty years we have been fighting for.

Proponents argue this is about ensuring quality education; that this doesn’t involve private or homeschooling children. They emphasize other words, “All **children** have a fundamental **right** to a **quality** public **education**...,” and talk about what they *intend* for it to mean - above what it actually says. Poorly written laws have consequences waiting for the right courtroom to misread them. Intents may be noble, but good intentions do not make good law. Courts use the *written* word, not the intentions of the writers. Proponents also argue that parental rights and homeschooling are protected elsewhere, yet this is a *constitutional* amendment that would be in conflict with or trump those previous rulings.

I also question why this is needed. If authors want to fix public school systems, they have 100% authority and oversight of them now, *without changing the constitution*. If the only intent is to improve public schools, they can and should do that through local school districts, the Minnesota Legislature, and Department of Education. Why don’t they? Why do the authors need this change to help failing state-run schools? Does the solution fit the problem or create new ones?

This amendment can *easily* be read as an effective removal of the parental rights to determine education for their own children; that parents no longer decide what quality is because that is now a “paramount responsibility” of the state. This requires further legislation and litigation where decisions on curriculum, delivery, materials, religious content, facilities, and other aspects are determined by the state.

Please know how fervently I oppose this bill!

Thank you!

Pamela Patnode, Ed.D.