

Testimony for Minnesota Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee regarding HF874

HF874 New Constitutional Language Proposed:

“All children have a fundamental right to a quality public education that fully prepares them with the skills necessary for participation in the economy, our democracy, and society, as measured against uniform achievement standards set forth by the state. It is a paramount duty of the state to ensure quality public schools that fulfill this fundamental right.”

From: Kristi Jalmasco

Date: March 7, 2021

Seeking to bypass the Minnesota voters by writing a measure that changes our state constitution in regard to education of our children is both unnecessary and dangerous. The state already has the authority, in the Department of Education, to provide a “quality public education” to all students who attend public school. That is the proper venue for dealing with the quality of public education. It is the paramount duty of parents to decide which education fits their child(ren), and the paramount duty of the state to be sure the education offered in public school is of the highest quality through the channels already established and maintained by multiple hundreds millions of tax dollars.

However, the **type** of education a child receives is not a “fundamental right.” Public school is **one of several** types of education a family may choose for their children and verbiage stating anything otherwise is misleading, contrary to our constitution, and harmful. Minnesota’s current protection of the rights of parents to choose the best education, on a case by case basis, for each of their children is among the best in the country and should not be undone with vague and destructive language. The quality of education in our public schools has been declining for years, which has prompted the exodus of families seeking a higher quality education either in private or homeschool settings. Protecting the fundamental right of families to provide the best education for their students must remain the top priority in this issue.

Please strongly oppose HF874.

Respectfully,

Kristi Jalmasco, parent of private and homeschool educated children
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