

March 6, 2021

Re: MACHE Member Letter of Opposition to Minnesota House File 874
From: Kenneth A. Paulsen, Minnesota homeschooling parent and MACHE member
To: House Education Policy Committee

My name is Kenneth Paulsen, and I am a current Minnesota homeschooling parent that has, along with my wife, lead our family in home education since 2005. We are grateful to the Minnesotans who came before us that have worked with the Minnesota legislature to make homeschooling legal in Minnesota. Our hope is that our opposition to HF874 will be strongly considered.

Over the course of several years, our five children have received a quality home education that has offered them the chance to learn at their own pace, pursue interests unique to them as students, and challenge themselves and their peers through participation in rigorous curriculum, educational cooperative learning associations, community service projects, organized sports, and academic competitions. Home education has allowed our children unique opportunities for them to participate in overseas mission and service trips to experience other cultures far different from our own here in Minnesota. Locally, they have had the opportunity to participate in helping those less-fortunate than we are.

Our home education has prepared our children to meet the academic and professional challenges of life. Specifically our oldest child has recently graduated from the University Of Northwestern – St. Paul's nursing program which is currently rated first of all programs in Minnesota. He has also secured a full-time nursing position at a large hospital system in the Twin Cities, MN. Our second son is a college senior pursuing a Health Sciences degree at a local accredited university with the goal of becoming a physician's assistant. Our oldest daughter is finishing a challenging pastry program at a St. Paul college and is doing very well. Her desire is to open her own pastry and café in the future. Our middle daughter is a fourth grader and is testing at a 12th grade level. Our youngest daughter has shown aptitudes of creativity and problem-solving.

As parents, we feel that parents are the best influence in a child's life to direct the child's education. It would be far more effective to put more emphasis on strengthening the home. The well-functioning home is the bedrock of our society. A strong home creates a strong neighborhood. A strong neighborhood creates a strong community. A strong community creates a strong city. A strong city creates a strong state. A strong state creates a strong nation. And in this day there are too many attacks on the family that will cause a chain effect to the detriment of all.

I want to close this letter with a quote from Mr. David Watkins, MACHE Executive Director, from his testimony for Minnesota Senate E-12 Finance and Policy Committee of March 6, 2020:

We are concerned that this proposed amendment would lay the groundwork for the stripping away of more parental rights, and open the door for stronger state control of the family. It is the role of the state to see that children are educated, but it is not the role of the state to mandate early education or to approve the curriculum or methodology. A good education is important, but it is not the answer to society's problems.

We trust that you to reject this proposed amendment to the Minnesota Constitution.