

Senate Education Committee

Trevor Currier 271-4151

HB 1155, repealing the home education advisory council.

Hearing Date: April 14, 2026

Time Opened: 9:25 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:47 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Ward, Sullivan, Abbas and Prentiss

Members of the Committee Absent : Senator Altschiller

Bill Analysis: This bill repeals the home education advisory council.

Sponsors:

Rep. Peternel

Rep. Drago

Rep. Drye

Sen. Ward

Who supports the bill: 3 People signed in support of HB 1155. To see the full list of sign-ins, please email the committee aide (trevor.currier@gc.nh.gov).

Who opposes the bill: 60 People signed in opposition to HB 1155. To see the full list of sign-ins, please email the committee aide (trevor.currier@gc.nh.gov).

Who is neutral on the bill: No one.

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Victoria Sullivan – *Senate District 18*

- Senator Sullivan introduced House Bill 1155 on behalf of Representative Peternel and established that the bill repeals the Home Education Advisory Council.

Representative Katy Peternel - *Carroll 6*

- Representative Peternel stated that there has been an increase in dysfunction of the Home Education Advisory Council (HEAC).
- She stated that the HEAC is abusing taxpayer resources.
- Representative Peternel explained that the HEAC's original function was to aid in rule changes, which are few and far between at this point in time. She added that most of the rules are now memorialized in statute.

- Representative Peternel stated that the Department of Education (DOE) now sends 2 employees to ensure that meetings stay cordial.
- Representative Peternel stated that there are organizations and parents around the state who are very active in, and aware of, the process by which legislative concerns can be raised.
- Senator Sullivan asked how many people currently sit on the Council. Representative Peternel responded that the Council consists of eight members, but one position has remained vacant for years.
- Senator Sullivan asked whether the DOE must send these two staff members to every meeting. Representative Peternel responded that they are not required by statute to do so, but it has become standard practice as meetings have become more contentious.
- Senator Abbas asked whether this bill would repeal all rule-making. Representative Peternel replied that this is not the case and that rule-making would still be in place.
- Senator Prentiss asked for an example of the increased contention in the NEAC. Representative Peternel responded that last year the council spent multiple months on its annual report because there was no agreement on how things should be done. She added that during that time, months of minutes went unapproved because the council was busy arguing over the annual report.
- Senator Prentiss asked whether the presence of the 2 DOE members was what the Representative considered an abuse of taxpayer dollars. Representative Peternel responded that this takes time away from the department's duties and consumes a significant portion of these people's days.
- Senator Ward asked about the number of legislative members on the council. Representative Peternel responded that 2 House members and 1 Senate member do not have voting power.

Doris Hohensee

- Ms. Hohensee stated that this bill repeals the HEAC as well as the rulemaking processes.
- Ms. Hohensee stated that the HEAC was created in 1990 to discuss changes and concerns regarding home education regulations in the legislature and to conduct grievance hearings.
- Ms. Hohensee explained that the law as of 2012 no longer requires the HEAC to provide due process for parents seeking legal support in home education.

- She explained that the home education movement predominantly consists of active parents who can contact their elected legislators and express their concerns.
- Ms. Hohensee stated that the HEAC has served its purpose and is no longer necessary.
- Senator Prentiss asked if this bill repeals all rulemaking related to home education. Ms. Hohensee replied yes.
- Senator Prentiss asked whether there is still a relationship between the Department of Education and homeschooling parents. Ms. Hohensee responded that the council was created to assist with the rule-making process and that there is no longer a specific need for the HEAC.
- Senator Prentiss asked about the relationship between parents who want to contact the DOE regarding homeschooling. Ms. Hohensee responded that no such relationship exists because parents simply notify a private school or the DOE, and there is no longer a curriculum review. She added that the current system works and that no new rules are being made.

Dianne Nolin - *Catholics United for Home Education (CUHE)*

- Ms. Nolin explained that the HEAC has been beneficial in conveying trends and current issues faced by home educators.
- Ms. Nolin stated that she cannot support eliminating the only state-level advocacy for home education.
- She stated that HB 1155 does not eliminate rulemaking, and the council was created to assist with the rulemaking process.
- Senator Ward asked if Ms. Nolin had asked the DOE for their input on this legislation. Ms. Nolan responded no.
- Senator Prentiss asked whether Ms. Nolan's testimony addressed the ongoing value of the HEAC as a mediator for discussions between parents and the DOE. Ms. Nolan responded yes.

Heather Barker - *New Hampshire School Administrators Association*

- Ms. Barker stated that the past 2 years have been contentious due to the addition of certain members, and that before their inclusion, the council was peaceful and productive across all spheres.

- Ms. Barker explained that home education is one of the state-recognized pathways and that the community is vast and increasingly enjoyed by families.
- She explained that the contention can be partially attributed to the differences between the school choice and home education pathways.
- She explained that she supported the amendment Representative Peternel introduced in the House, but not the bill in its present form.

TC

Date Hearing Report completed: April 15, 2026