

Statement in Opposition to HB 1268

Dear House Education Committee Members,

I direct research for the Coalition for Responsible Home Education (CRHE), the only national organization that advocates for an approach to homeschooling grounded in children's rights. I write on behalf of our organization to express our opposition to HB 1268, which would remove crucial protections that ensure homeschooled children are receiving a quality education in a safe home.

The New Hampshire homeschool statute currently mandates that home educators assess students for progress through an annual evaluation, HB 1268 would strip this requirement. Regular assessment is a reasonable and effective mechanism for ensuring homeschooled students are on pace with their peers. As the only organization in the homeschooling space operated by people who were homeschooled themselves, we regularly run focus groups with alumni, who overwhelmingly express that being tested would have helped them prepare for life after graduation. This is because the many families who homeschool responsibly evaluate their children without being compelled to do so, homeschooled children can fall drastically behind without recourse. [According to one national-scale study](#), homeschooled high school students were two to three times more likely to report being behind grade level than peers. These effects carry through into adulthood: [research has repeatedly demonstrated](#) that homeschool alumni attend college at lower rates, and work for less pay, than their counterparts in school.

New Hampshire's current assessment provision ensures that children who are falling behind receive the educational support and resources they need, while also affording families considerable flexibility in determining how children are assessed to accommodate learners' individual needs, especially those with disabilities and special learning needs.

The passage of HB 1268 would also create a fissure in New Hampshire's safety net for homeschooled children. Most parents homeschool in their children's best interest, but research shows that there are distinct risk factors for abuse and neglect in homeschool settings. We maintain the [Homeschooling's Invisible Children database](#), which has identified over 500 publicly documented cases of abuse and neglect that have resulted in over 230 fatalities of homeschooled children in the United States. Our analysis shows that abusive caregivers pull children from school to "homeschool" in order to evade scrutiny and escalate abuse. By making notice of intent to homeschool optional when families relocate, and by making further contact with the state completely optional, HB 1268 makes it exceptionally easy for caregivers homeschooling in bad faith to use homeschooling as a mechanism to isolate and harm children. Notification ensures that homeschooled children are accounted for while posing minimal administrative burden to responsible homeschooling families, which is why the vast majority of states (thirty-eight) require it.

New Hampshire's current homeschool statute carefully balances homeschooling families' freedom to oversee their children's education while safeguarding the rights of homeschooled children. Please vote no on HB 1268 to preserve these floor-level, common-sense protections.

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