

Written Testimony:

Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Deborah Gerth, and I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony today in opposition to HB 512.

HB512 is a dangerous bill to all education in Ohio. Specifically in regards to home education, it has the potential of making our current homeschool code, stable and effective in Ohio since 1989, up to the whims and discretion of an un-elected, un-accountable bureaucracy that can change each time we have a new governor.

I need to give a little background info first, as I cannot assume everyone here understands how our homeschool code works: our Ohio homeschool code is Administrative Code 3301-34. This is an \*administrative\* code that amplifies the Ohio Revised Code section 3321.04. Our homeschool code rests upon this ORC 3321.04.

The following are excerpts from our ORC:

"Every parent of any child of compulsory school age who is not employed under an age and schooling certificate must send such child to a school or a special education program that conforms to the minimum standards prescribed by the XXXXstate board of educationXXXX, (stricken out to be changed to) department of learning and achievement"

--->Our concern: Will a department with no public accountability care about our homeschooling rights? What might a bureaucracy filled with appointees consider "minimum standards", particularly if they have a personal bias against home education?

"The XXXXstate board of educationXXX (stricken out to be changed to) department of learning and achievement may by rule prescribe conditions governing the issuance of excuses, which shall be binding upon the authorities empowered to issue them."

-----> Our concern: Will a department with no public accountability prescribe conditions governing issuing of excusals look anything like we currently have? Well, that will probably depend on who the current governor is and if they happen to like home education. Our laws and requirements could change dramatically every time we get a new administration.

"Sec. 3321.07. If any child attends upon instruction elsewhere than in a public school such instruction shall be in a school which conforms to the minimum standards prescribed by the XXXXstate board of educationXXXX department of learning and achievement."

-----> Our concern: Will a department with no public accountability have the ability to change what "minimum standards" means for our homeschools? Will this look anything like we currently have? That will also will depend on who the current governor is and if they happen to like home education. Our laws and requirements could change dramatically every time we get a new administration.

As the admin of nearly 8000 Ohio homeschooling families, we have seen the result, many thousands of times, of un-elected bureaucrats who decide to try to make the law into their own image. It results in harassment of law-abiding citizens that requires legal representation in order to stop the harassment. This bill simply takes this continuing problem in Ohio and expands it to the highest office. On behalf of the group with the greatest diversity of homeschoolers in Ohio: conservative, liberal, religious, non-religious, of every orientation and belief: we oppose this bureaucratic takeover of education in Ohio.

Thank you.