

Ohio Homeschooling Parent

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Proponent Testimony HB602

New Richmond OH, 45157

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Public Health Policy Committee

Chair Adam Mathews, Vice Chair Brian Stewart, Ranking Member Beth Liston, and members of the Public Health Policy Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of House Bill 602

Our Homeschool group was put through unwarranted judgement as an unregistered child daycare program during the winter and spring term of 2024.

The group is comprised of home educated children and some siblings of those children; we only meet during school hours. The group spends a majority of their time outdoors, but met at a leader's home during cold weather months.

This home is ideal for a family like mine, due to having fenced acreage of space to explore safely.

I am a home educator of two unique needs children. The ability to be at someone's home helps my autistic/GAD daughter. We don't need to be concerned with strangers entering our space or any of the other overwhelming situations that take place in public spaces or classrooms.

We have been shamed and excluded from all other forms of homeschool co-ops, classes, and groups due to having children with different needs and abilities.

Thanks to this unique local group, my daughters have elevated socially and emotionally.

Not all children can learn by sitting in a chair all day quietly. Many need to learn while standing, moving, watching, doing, and so many other ways opportunities can be provided for neurodivergent children's education.

We shouldn't be concerned about zoning or childcare laws, due to the fact that we are not a childcare, and it is a blessing to have someone willing to allow the children to safely be at their home or property.

Please also consider changing the wording in the legislation (paragraph (V) (3) on page 9). There is confusion amongst leaders in regards to what this means. It defines that one parent per child needs to be present to some, and one parent of any child to others. This leads to confusion and miscommunication.

The ability to leave the site, when necessary is of great importance to the education and mental health of my daughters. If my autistic/GAD daughter is really struggling with being overwhelmed on a particular day, the ability to take her home or away from what is stressing her is paramount to her mental health. The ability to allow her sister to stay with the group, while taking the struggling daughter home, is essential to her life skills development.

My family has finally felt supported by finding a group like this. I hope that there are more groups willing to make changes similar to ours, so more families can feel like they have found where they belong and the children can learn and thrive in preparation for being productive members of society, when they reach adulthood.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration.