

My name is Bradley Bastedo from Upper Southampton Township in Bucks County. I have the pleasure of serving as the vice president of the Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania. For a quarter of a century this non-profit organization has been an advocate for Christ-centered homeschooling.

I appear before this Honorable committee to express my support for House Bill 1013, which is a common sense modification to the Pennsylvania Homeschool Law.

The homeschool community is diverse and so are their reasons for homeschooling. However, each of these families hold as a core principle a belief that home-based education is the best for their children. As for my wife and I, we believe that this Christ-centered, home-based, individualized education is the best for our son.

Nearly thirty years ago, I served on the Neshaminy School Board following a disastrous strike, which at that time was the longest school strike in the history of Pennsylvania. During my one year term as president, I could clearly see the time constraints, burdens and pressure placed upon the superintendent.

House Bill 1013 eliminates the unnecessary superintendent evaluation of homeschool portfolios to determine that an "appropriate education" is occurring, even after a certified evaluation. This evaluation includes an extensive review of a portfolio, and interview of the student and parent to determine that an "appropriate education" is occurring. This needless additional step creates a time and financial burden upon the superintendent (and thus, the taxpayers). In these times of tight budgets and time constraints, the superintendent's time is best focused on their own students, staff and local taxpayers.

The recent facts reveal that over 99% of the students that are homeschooled are receiving an appropriate education. "Appropriate

education" is a misnomer as homeschooling parents seek to provide an individual education plan that does not just meet the standard, but to exceed that standard.

House Bill 1013 seeks to eliminate discrimination against homeschooling families that is occurring in this commonwealth. It saddens me that Pennsylvania is the only state that mandates graduation requirements, but refuses to recognize parent-based diplomas from students who have been evaluated by certified evaluators.

Pennsylvania establishes the graduation requirement that the student and the family must meet. However, the state will not recognize the parent's diploma, but imposes an additional requirement of receiving a diploma from a state approved entity. The second alternative for a homeschooler would be for the local school district to certify that the student has met graduation requirements. In reality, this alternate opportunity is nonexistent.

This discrimination manifests itself further by rules and procedures in the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency which will not recognize parent-issued diplomas, this bars the student from receiving any financial assistance. A homeschooled student who has met or exceeded the state required graduation standards is barred from receiving assistance that another similarly situated non-homeschooled student would receive.

William Penn in his Charter of Privileges in 1701, recognized that, "... no people can be truly happy ... if abridged of the freedom of their conscience". Homeschooling parents have exercised their God-given freedom of conscience to educate their children. This great commonwealth was founded on that ideal, and we should fulfill that ideal. Do not permit this discrimination to continue.

Please support House Bill 1013 as a common sense, reasonable modification to cure this discrimination against homeschooled students.