

Melinda Swagger

From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:11 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Erin Yost, email - Erin_nicole_18@yahoo.com, phone number - (304) 308-8630, org - , zip-code - 24740

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

As a former public school teacher who is married to a teacher and currently a homeschool Mother of 8 years, there are several issues with requiring more proof from homeschool families.

First, as unfortunate as some events have been, the majority of us are parents just working hard to provide a wonderful education to our own children. Our children do not belong to the state or the school system. I can name several families who have moved across state borders to not have to deal with the requirements already in place.

Second, the school system's teachers and admin are already being stretched beyond their contracted hours and their ability to provide quality instruction. They do not need or want more on their plate. We already have a crisis in our ability to fully staff our schools with qualified professionals.

Third, There are already checks in place. Those checks just need to be more appropriately organized and cared for. Paperwork is routinely lost and board personnel are completely uneducated on current homeschool policy for the state.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter!

Erin

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:26 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Brittany Neal, email - blneal1210@gmail.com, phone number - (304) 900-3805, org - , zip-code - 25143

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

This bill is very much needed. The county BOEs are not doing an acceptable job with keeping track of homeschool paperwork. I recently requested my children's homeschool records from Kanawha County, only to be told that my daughter (whose NOIA was filed in 2018 and has had 3rd and 5th grade assessment results sent in) is not in their records at all. They could not find her and needed her data sent in again. So technically, she was not a student anywhere (public, private, or homeschool) and they would not have even known, had I not requested her records. This is ridiculous and unacceptable. This bill would put this in the hands of the state BOE and give them an organized way to keep track of homeschool data.

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 8:32 AM
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Contact Info: name - Robin Barr, email - Robinbarr31@gmail.com, phone number - , org - , zip-code - 25268

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

I do not believe this bill is in the best interest of West Virginia homeschool families or the school districts we report to. The amount of mistakes and losses made by county school board officials shows adding these requirements to their workload will cause more error than benefit.

I have personal experience with this, last year I removed my son from public school in March. When August came around, the school was contacting me saying he was still on the registration and they could not find his NOI. The secretary I quote said "it (NOI paperwork) must be on the super intendants desk somewhere, I can't find anything but I'm sure we have it" I had my personal copy in hand and was able to

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:08 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Jerry Myers, email - jmyers_1023@yahoo.com, phone number - (304) 924-6875, org - , zip-code - 26343

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

I pulled my son from public schools when he was in the sixth grade due to bullying and the poor quality of education that he was receiving. He will receive his HOMESCHOOL diploma this spring. In the time that we have had the pleasure of educating our child, his NPR and gpa has doubled. We are now homeschooling our daughter.

As a parent, I find it very frustrating to be required to report our performance to a failed system. Maybe the school systems should be managed with a homeschoolers mindset. I am confident the children would receive a better education.

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:16 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Barbara Hammack, email - Affordable5322@yahoo.com, phone number - (304) 532-3171, org - , zip-code - 25276

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

Please pass this bill

A handwritten signature, likely belonging to the author of the email, is placed here.

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:19 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Candace Clark, email - candaceclark@icloud.com, phone number - , org - , zip-code - 25504

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

I am a homeschooling mom who cares deeply about my children and their education. I have no issues obtaining an assessment. I do have issues having to submit those assessments. The board in my county does not know my child. We made the decision to homeschool for a variety of reasons. Academics being the number one reason. My daughter is dyslexic. I truly wish to focus solely on getting her reading at grade level. The assessments I have to submit to the board hinder that in a lot of ways. I have to focus on science and social studies even though my daughter needs to focus on reading and math first. I have no issues teaching all subjects..I just wish I could solely focus on getting her reading. She does see a tutor to help her. This takes time out of our week as well so at times we are doing school on Saturdays to make up for our lost lessons in science and social studies.

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:24 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Kendra, email - Zeigler, phone number - (304) 633-4551, org - , zip-code - 25504

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

The Board of Education's mishandling of our submitted paperwork has caused an unnecessary delay in funding for the Hope Scholarship. This kind of oversight is unacceptable, as it directly impacts students and families relying on these funds for their education. We need better accountability and efficiency to ensure this doesn't happen again. We have had multiple occurrences with our local Board of Education, where we have submitted paperwork or end of your assessments and we have email confirmation of receipt. But none of that matters because in the weeks or months following they report they never received it and our funding was withdrawn for the Hope scholarship. When I called the Board of Education to send them the receipt that we had submitted it, they said there was an error in their system but it did not change that my son's funding was put on hold for more than 30 days. This also did not change the report they submitted to the West Virginia Board of Education, stating all of the noncompliance related to homeschooling, when in reality, it was an error on the Board of Education part. This story as well as many other others is a reason why the local board of education cannot be trusted to handle and to be the sole reporter of Homeschool/hopeschool compliance.

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2025 9:25 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB 2777

Contact Info: name - Pamela Koon, email - pamela_koon@yahoo.com, phone number - , org - , zip-code - 26218

Date of Submission: 03/13/2025

I urge you to pass this bill. The board of education often loses paperwork then tries to say homeschooled aren't in compliance. Bills like this are important. Homeschoolers don't need more oversight, they need less.

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From: Public Comments
Sent: Sunday, March 2, 2025 10:30 AM
To: House Educational Choice
Subject: Public Comments on HB2777

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Contact Info: name - Mariah Richards, email - mprichards07@gmail.com, phone number - , org - , zip-code - 26554

Date of Submission: 03/02/2025

To the Honorable Members of the West Virginia Legislature,

I write to express my strong opposition to House Bill 2777 as currently written. While I respect the intent to provide families with greater educational choices, this bill significantly reduces oversight for homeschooled students, learning pods, and microschools—potentially putting West Virginia’s most vulnerable children at risk.

Concerns Regarding Child Safety and Well-Being

1. Weakening Local Oversight Increases the Risk of Abuse and Neglect
 - o Schools serve as mandatory reporters for child abuse and neglect. Teachers, school counselors, and staff are often the first line of defense in identifying and intervening when children are in unsafe situations.
 - o By reducing reporting requirements and eliminating regular check-ins with the local county board of education, this bill makes it easier for children to disappear from the system with no oversight, potentially leading to tragic consequences, including abuse, neglect, and even death.
2. At-Risk Children Will Lose Access to Essential Services
 - o Many children in West Virginia depend on public schools for meals, medical referrals, and mental health support.
 - o Without structured oversight, there is no guarantee that children who are homeschooled or placed in alternative education settings will receive basic nutrition, healthcare, or intervention services when needed.
3. Lack of Accountability for Educational Progress
 - o While parental rights are important, we must ensure that children receive an adequate education.

- By removing certain academic reporting requirements and reducing assessment submissions, HB 2777 creates the potential for children to be left uneducated without intervention.

4. Increased Risk for Children with Disabilities
 - The bill allows special education students to be placed in homeschooling, learning pods, and microschools without clear safeguards ensuring they receive proper support services.
 - If oversight is removed, children with disabilities may lose access to critical therapies and accommodations, setting them further behind their peers.

Recommended Amendments to Ensure Child Safety

While I oppose HB 2777 in its current form, I urge lawmakers to consider the following amendments to balance educational freedom with child protection:

1. Mandatory Welfare Check-Ins for Homeschooled and Alternative Education Students
 - Require an annual in-person meeting with a designated school official, county board representative, or social services professional for all students not enrolled in a traditional school.
 - Ensure that homeschooled and microschool students are seen by a trusted adult outside the home at least once a year.
2. Preserve Accountability Measures for Academic Progress
 - Maintain annual assessment submissions for all students, rather than limiting reporting to grades 3, 5, 8, and 11.
 - Require documentation of regular instruction to ensure children are being educated at an appropriate level.
3. Ensure Children Retain Access to Critical Public School Services
 - Allow homeschooled, microschool, and learning pod students to receive free or reduced-price meals at public schools if they qualify.
 - Ensure access to mental health resources, special education services, and medical referrals for all children, regardless of their educational setting.
4. Enhance Oversight for Families with a History of Abuse or Educational Neglect
 - Require additional home visits or monitoring for families with a documented history of child abuse, neglect, or truancy violations before allowing home instruction exemptions.
 - Allow the county superintendent to impose stricter oversight in cases where a child's welfare is at risk.

Conclusion

HB 2777, as written, removes critical protections that help ensure West Virginia's children are safe, fed, and receiving a proper education. While I support parental choice in education, we cannot pass a bill that opens the door for neglect and harm to go unnoticed. I urge lawmakers to reject this bill in its current form and instead amend it to prioritize both educational freedom and child safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mariah Richards