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Vermont Home Education Network

Senate Ed testimony from AOE

March 12, 2024

I went to Senate Ed today and listened to the AOE testify about S.167 the Misc Ed bill. I was not allowed to talk today and there are a lot of things in this bill that have nothing to do with home study. **You should listen to this testimony.** Home Study testimony starts at 44:15 at this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NTJfsSNvill>

Near as I can tell 3 Senators want to add hearings after enrollments back in and the AOE does not like this idea. Dr Ann Bordonaro, PhD and Interim Deputy Secretary, suggested adding back the submission of the end of year assessment back in. Dr. Bordonaro also suggested at the out set that they would prefer the committee do nothing but the committee chair said we are doing something.

The most telling moments was when Sen. Gulick had this to say about assessments:

- *“Maybe we just need to go back to that. We just need to go back to that requiring more paper work. If that would solve a lot of this problem. Let’s do it. I heard you say earlier it is onerous on families to submit paper work. Well... sorry. We’re educating kids. It’s too bad if it is onerous on the parents. They are making a choice to educate their child. If submitting the paper work solves the problem then let’s go back to that. And maybe skip the hearing which seems to be problematic.”*
- *Sen. Gulick also added, “Our charge as state [Senate Ed] committee is not to protect parents from having to do work. I have a bit problem with that. That is not what we are here for. They should be working. And as the AOE, the Agency of Education, it is your job to make sure that those kids are getting educated and that those parents are doing what they are supposed to do. I’ll just leave it at that.”*

This is an erosion of your position in the life of your child. I want to know if the public school is not doing its job educating kids as they are supposed to do, will the committee do something about it? I'll just leave it at that.

So, this is very much still up in the air. I just do not know how this will end. We may lose this battle but this bill still has to go to House Education next. If assessment submission is in the final bill we will have more time to advocate against submission of assessments in the House.

I cannot tell you how hard it was to sit at the side of the room and not be able to speak. So much was said by people who do not actually understand the old or new law. And NONE of them understand the hearings after enrollments. Dr Bordonaro was only talking about what little experience she had with hearings before enrollment.

Another thing Dr Bordonaro was talking about was re-enrollments. The new law does not have re-enrollment in it. It vexes me to no end that they can't read and interpret law very well. Even one written by the AOE. You enroll ONCE, in Home Study, and your child STAYS enrolled until you tell them your child is no longer enrolled in home study. Then annually you let them know you are continuing in the enrollment you submitted. Just like they do in the public schools. You never "re-enroll" there.

I am going back to Senate Ed tomorrow. If this is not settled tomorrow, I will be unable to go back on Thursday as I am supposed to have some surgery done on my feet. So on to House Ed we will go and this time, I will ask you to email the members of just one committee once they have the bill. So wait for that call to send emails in a couple of weeks or so.

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