

SB

134

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)
Date Referred to Committee: April 23, 1997

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 5/1/97

The HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES Committee considered: CSSB 134(HES)

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 134(L&C) HOME SCHOOLING EDUCATION PROGRAM

“An Act relating to regulation of barbers and hairdressers; extending the termination date of the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers; and providing for an effective date.”

recommends it be replaced the same title
with the following committee substitute _____ a new title

additional referral to _____ Committee
 attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: _____ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) _____ APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date) _____
 fiscal note(s) _____ fiscal note(s) _____

zero fiscal note(s) _____ zero fiscal note(s) Education / 4-11-97

SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS	DP	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Fred Apson</i>	✓			
<i>Car Bunde</i>			✓	
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓			
<i>[Signature]</i>			✓	

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE *Car Bunde*

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version: CS SB 134(HES)
(S) Publish Date: 4-11-97

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected: EDUCATION
 Title: "An Act relating to home schooling for elementary and secondary students." BRU: K-12
 Component: Foundation
 Sponsor: Senator Leman
 Requester: Senate HESS COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 141

Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGES IN REVENUES						
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
Other:						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of current year (FY97) cost: \$ _____ \$0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
 AS 14.30.010(b) currently contains eleven exemptions from compulsory attendance. SB 134 will add a twelfth exemption to the statute. The Department of Education does not intend to regulate home schools if this legislation becomes law. The department cannot project changes to the foundation program due to the passage of this legislation.

Prepared by: Eddy Jeans
 Division: Education Support Services/School Finance Manager
 Approved by Commissioner: Shirley J. Holloway, Ph.D.
 Agency: Department of Education

Phone: 465-8679
 Date: 4/10/97
 Date: 4/10/97

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SENATOR LOREN LEMAN

Northwest Anchorage

716 W 4th Ave, Suite 520, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907) 258-8189 Session: State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801 (907) 465-2095

SB 134

Home Schooling Education Program

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 134 adds a paragraph to the compulsory attendance policy (AS 14.30.010(b)), providing an exemption for children schooled at home by a parent or guardian.

Currently there are no specific provisions in Alaska Statutes pertaining to home schooled students. There are several ways current home schoolers comply with the law. Home schoolers in technical compliance are now required to follow provisions for Private and Exempt Schools (AS 14.45.100-130), or they may participate in a government-sponsored course (AS 14.30.010 (b)(11)). Neither provision was designed with home schoolers in mind. Senate Bill 134 codifies current practice by many home schoolers.

Families in which children are home schooled are numerous. Their number is growing in our state. It is time we acknowledge them by law. SB 134 recognizes the important contribution home schooling parents and students make to our state.

**THE FOLLOWING PAGES MAY
NOT FILM LEGIBLY BECAUSE OF
THE POOR QUALITY OF THE ORIGINAL**

HOME EDUCATION

Across the United States



There are two—and only two—keys to educational success: hard work and parental involvement," says Michael Latta, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association.

Home schooling is a flourishing phenomenon within the United States. In the 1980s, the general public had never heard of home schooling, but today almost everyone has.

Still, society at large knows little about home schoolers: their backgrounds, their activities, or their achievements. A recent study conducted by Dr. Brian D. Ray, president of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), provides some answers. This study, *Strengths of Their Own: Home Schoolers Across America*, collected data on 5,402 home school students from 1,657 families for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 academic years. It is the largest and most comprehensive study on home schooling ever undertaken.

Just how prevalent is home education today? The data indicate there are approximately 1.23 million American children being taught at home. This exceeds the total public school enrollment for the state of New Jersey which has the 10th largest student population in the nation. Put another way, there are more home school students nationwide than there are public school students in Wyoming, Vermont, Delaware, North Dakota, Alaska, South Dakota, Rhode Island, Montana, and Hawaii combined. Home schooling has become a substantial portion of this nation's total K-12 student body (Figure 1.0).

More and more parents are choosing to home school. Why? Because it works. Compared to public school students, home educated students excel. Their scores on nationally-normed standardized achievement exams demonstrate this fact. On average, home schoolers out-perform their public school peers by 30 to 37 percentile points across all subjects (Figure 2.0).

And the longer a child is taught at home, the better he does on these tests (Figure 3.0). Students home schooled from early grades tend to score higher in subsequent years in some subject areas. (See Ray, 1997.)

Critics often claim only parents with teaching credentials can effectively home school. The data from this study suggest otherwise. Home school student test scores segmented by whether their parents have ever held a teaching certificate reveal a differential of only three percentile points (88 vs. 85—Figure 4.0).

The study also shows that home schooling parents' educational level has no practical significant effect on their children's academic performance (Figure 5.1). For public school students, however, a parents' educational level does affect their child's performance (Figures 5.2 & 5.3). In eighth grade math, public school students whose parents are college graduates score at the 63rd percentile, whereas students whose parents have less than a high school diploma score at the 28th percentile.

Does race make a difference in academic performance? Math and reading scores for minority home schoolers show no significant difference when compared to whites. However, a similar comparison for public school students demonstrates a substantial disparity (Figures 6.1 & 6.2).

When segmented by gender, test scores for home schoolers reveal that boys are slightly better in math, and girls are somewhat better in reading. Public school student performance in math follows a similar pattern, but boys' reading scores are markedly behind girls, a 15 percentile difference (Figure 7.0).

A cost-benefit analysis reveals that an average of \$540 spent per home school student yields an average 85th percentile ranking.

Continued on page 6



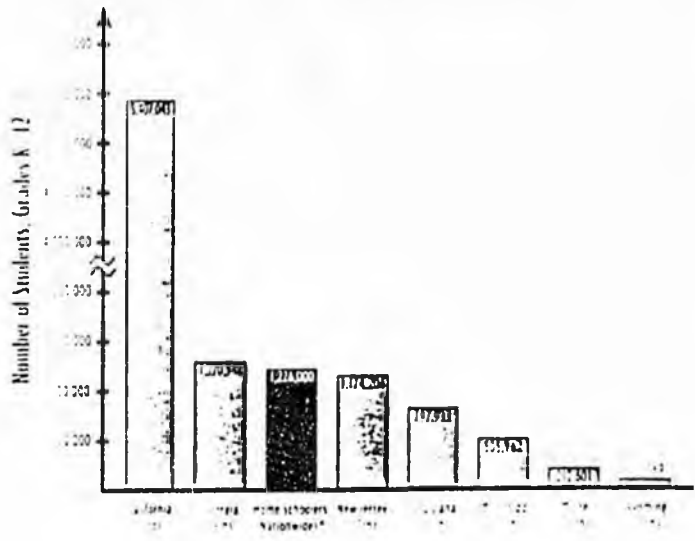
an executive summary provided by

HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION

BACKGROUND

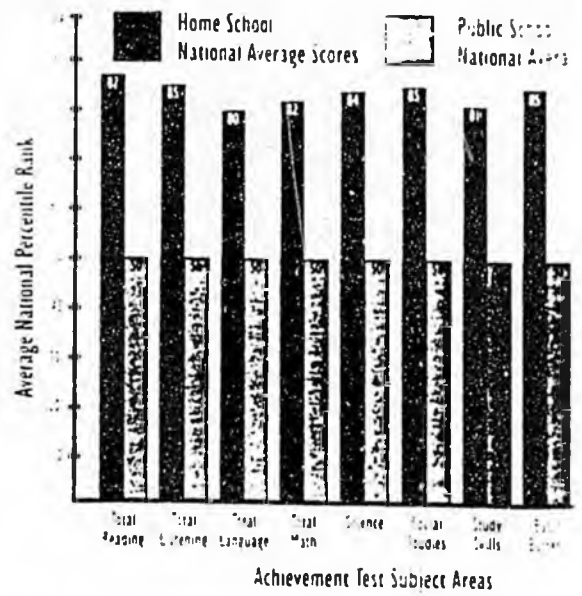
How Many Home Schoolers Are There?

Figure 1.0 – Home School Students Nationwide Compared to Selected State Public School Populations



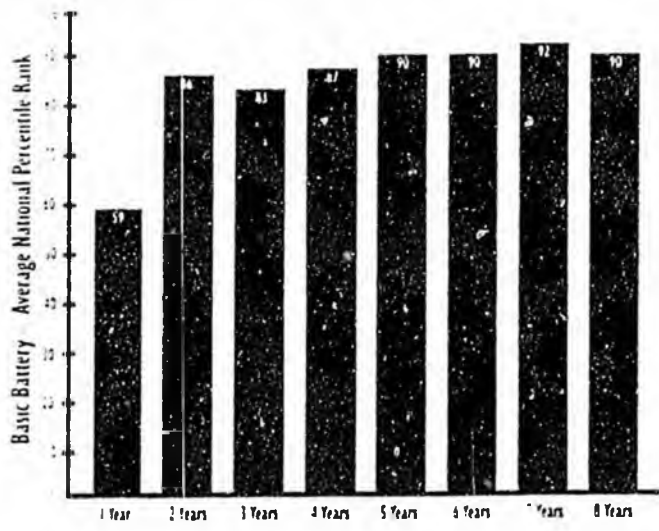
How Do Home School Students Score?

Figure 2.0



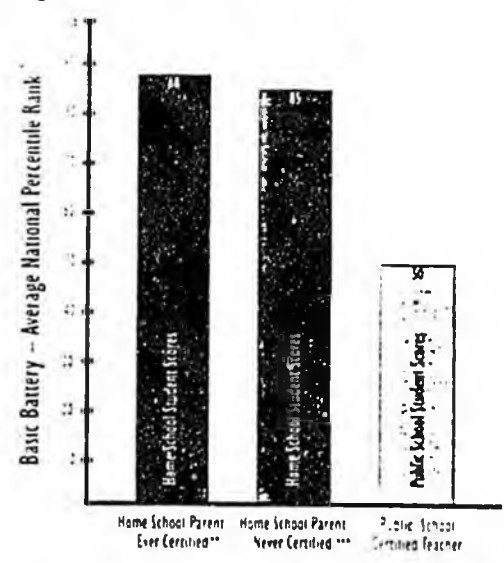
How Do Long-Term Home Schoolers Compare to Those Who Switch to Home Education Midstream?

Figure 3.0 – Achievement for Eighth Grade Home Schoolers Segmented by Years Taught at Home



Is Teacher Certification Necessary for High Achievement?

Figure 4.0



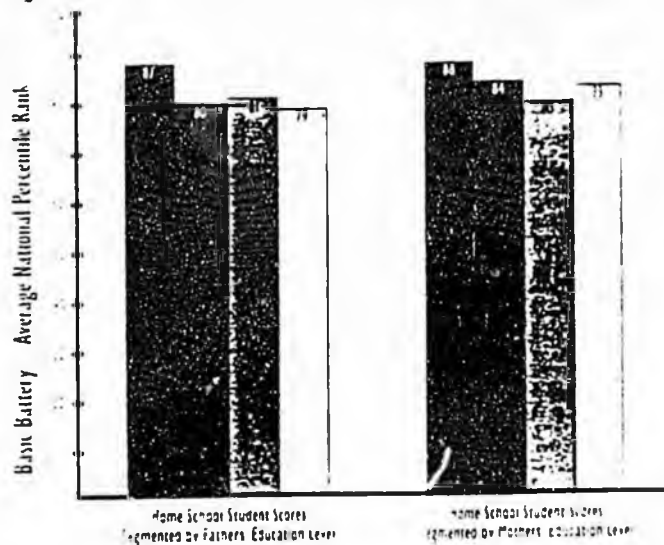
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Policy and Research, National Center for Education Statistics, 1997. For more detail about the non-equivalent nature of a simple percentile score, visit http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/nces_data/percentiles.htm.

Footnote: See also 1997 for more detail about the non-equivalent nature of a simple percentile score, which may differ from expected scores for the general population.
 ** Other parents who certify.
 *** Neither parent ever certified.

Does Parent Education Level Predict Student Achievement?

For Home Schoolers: NO!

Figure 5.1 – Home School Achievement – Basic Battery Test



For Public Schoolers: YES!

Figure 5.2 – Public School Achievement – Writing Test

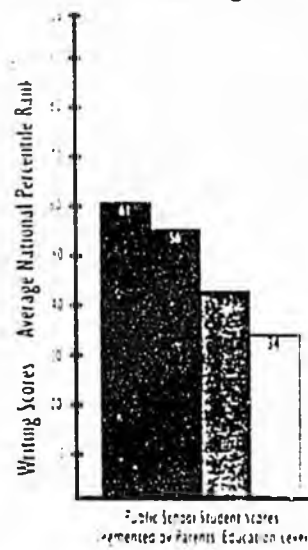
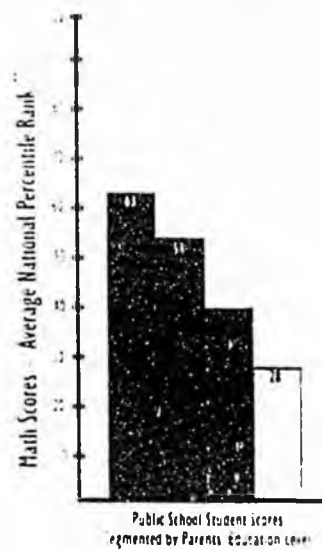


Figure 5.3 – Public School Achievement – Math Test



Key for Figures 5.1–5.3: Parents' Highest Education Level Attained



Figure 5.1 shows home school achievement figures are not significantly different from the public school achievement figures for the basic battery test. The Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, November. "Using Achievement Test Scores to Assess Student Achievement: Trends, Trends, and Trends." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Figure 5.2 shows public school achievement figures are significantly different from the home school achievement figures for the writing test. The Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, November. "Using Achievement Test Scores to Assess Student Achievement: Trends, Trends, and Trends." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

How Do Minorities Fare in Home Education?

Figure 6.1 – Race Relationship to Reading Test Scores

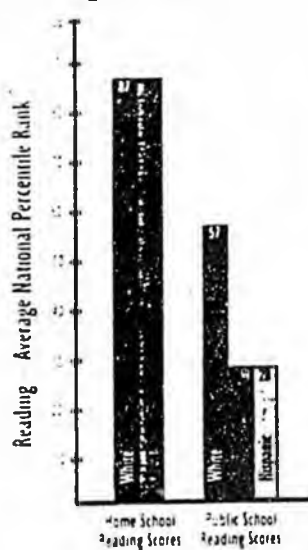
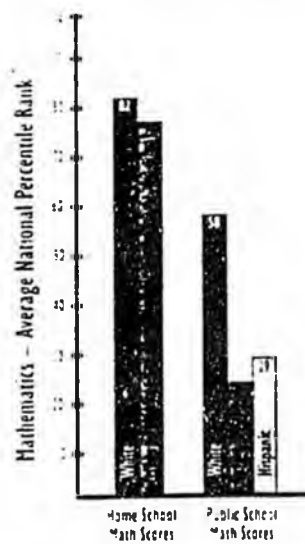


Figure 6.2 – Race Relationship to Mathematics Test Scores



What About the Gender Gap in Academics?

Figure 7.0

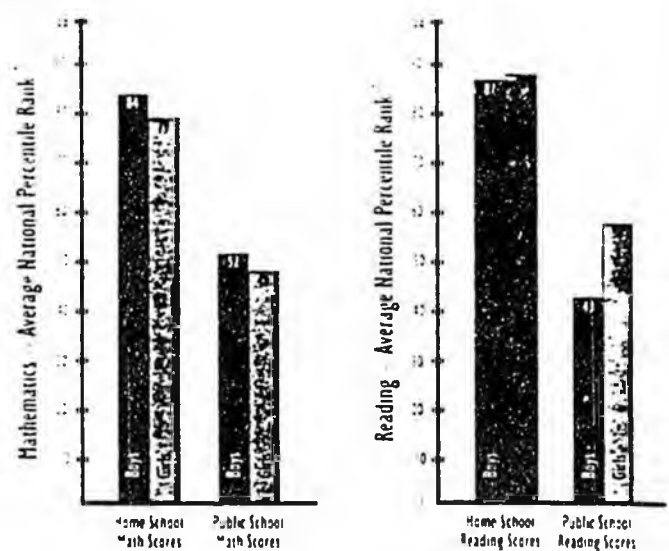
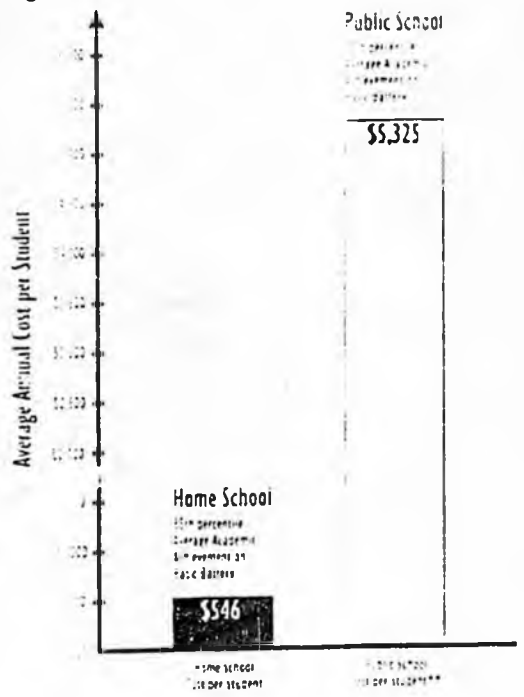


Figure 6.1 shows home school achievement figures are significantly different from the public school achievement figures for the reading test. The Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, November. "Using Achievement Test Scores to Assess Student Achievement: Trends, Trends, and Trends." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Figure 7.0 shows public school achievement figures are significantly different from the home school achievement figures for the 5th grade based on tables from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, 1996, November. "Using Achievement Test Scores to Assess Student Achievement: Trends, Trends, and Trends." Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

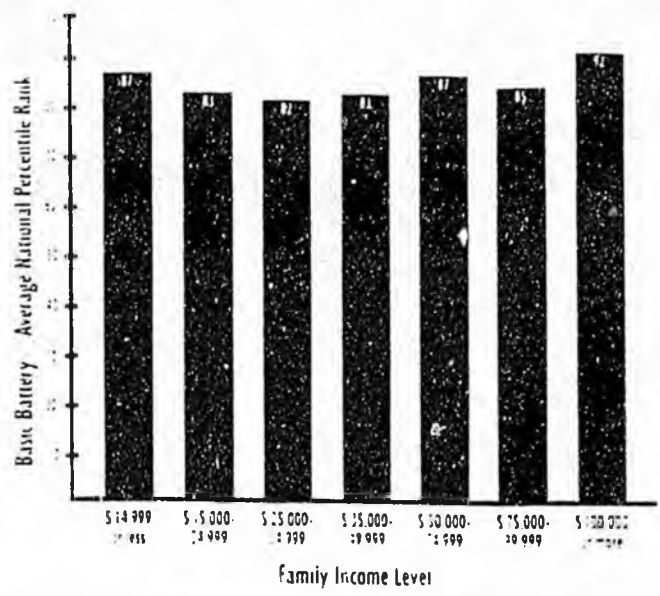
Does Spending Correlate with Achievement?

Figure 8.0



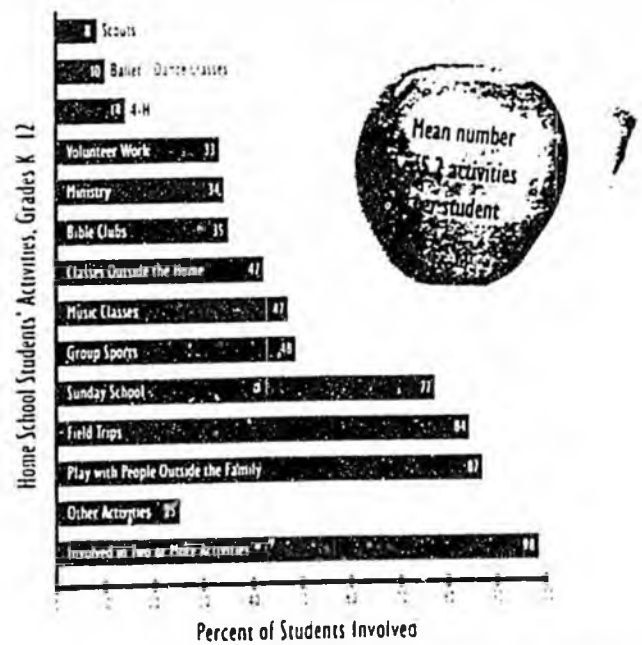
Is Family Income a Predictor of Academic Achievement for Home Schoolers?

Figure 9.0 - No Impact on Achievement



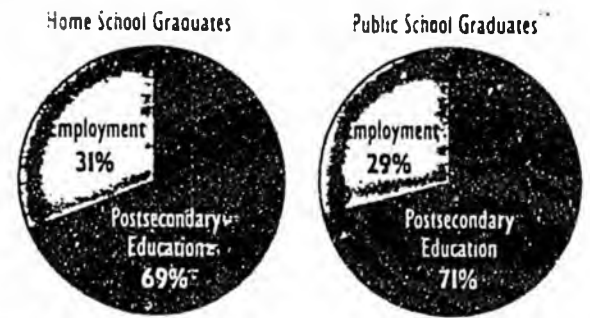
What About Socialization?

Figure 10.0 - Home Schoolers' Activities & Community Involvement



What Happens After Graduation?

Figure 11.0



Footnote: Percentages do not include military, employed, missions, ministry, volunteer work etc. since these categories were not available for both groups.
 *Based on data from National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) 1988-1994, descriptive statistics report.

Is Government Regulation Necessary for High Achievement?

Key for Figures 12.1 & 12.2




-  **Low Regulation**
No state requirement for parents to initiate any contact with the state.
-  **Moderate Regulation**
State requires parents to send notification, test scores and/or professional evaluation of student progress.
-  **High Regulation**
State requires parents to send notification or achievement test scores and/or professional evaluation, plus other requirements (e.g. curriculum approval by the state, teacher qualifications of parents, or home visits by state officials).

Figure 12.1 – State Regulation: No Impact on Home School Achievement

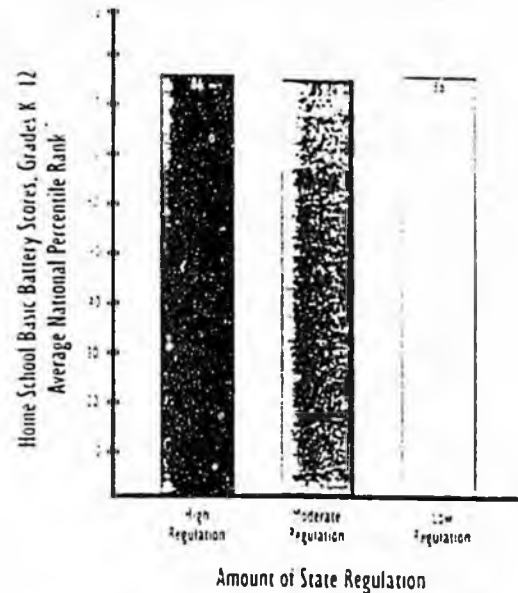
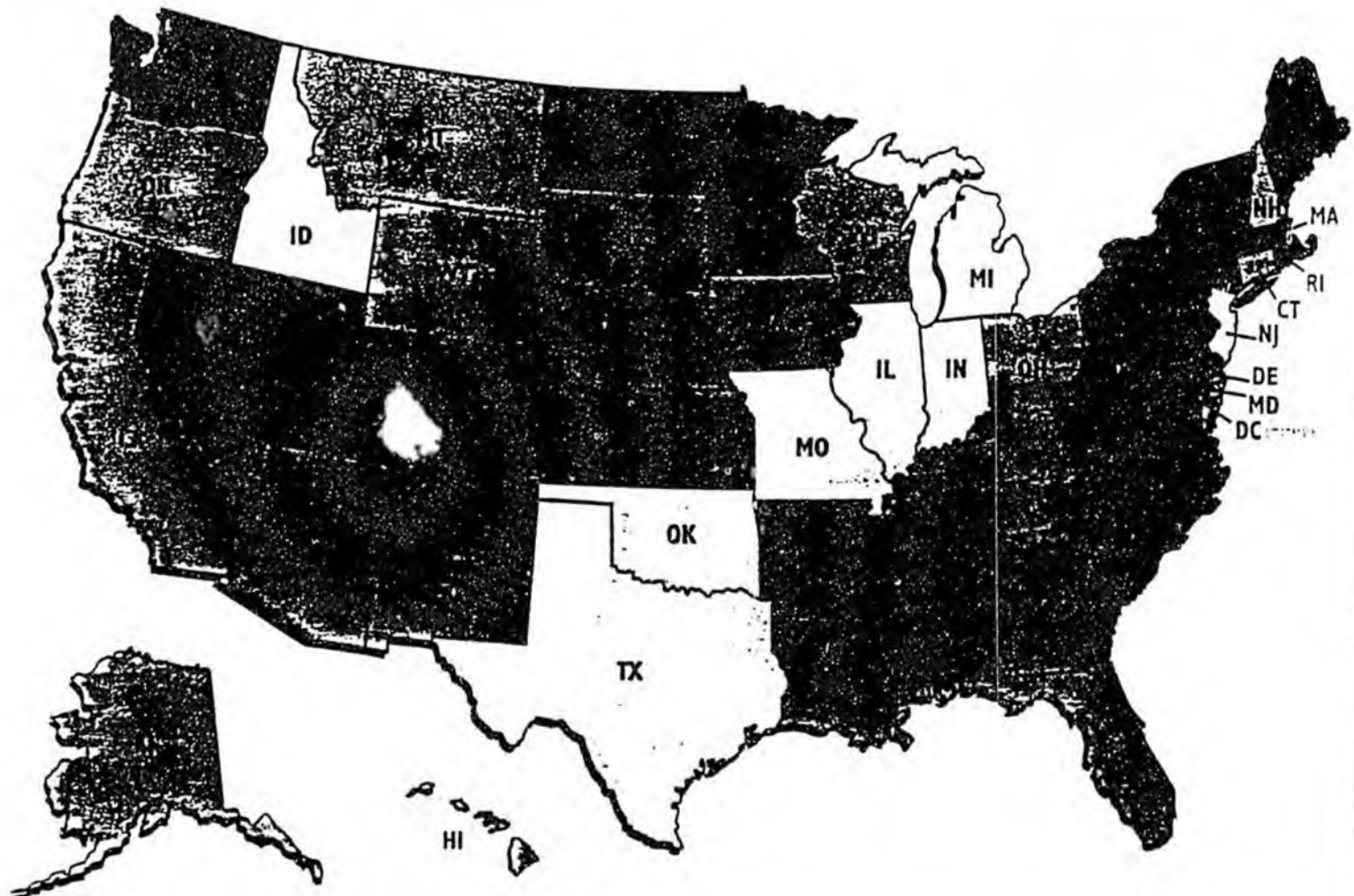
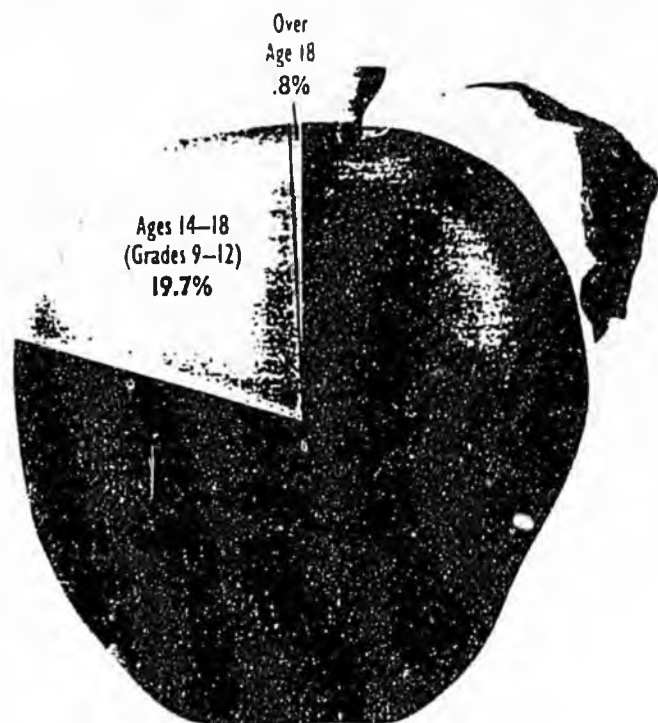


Figure 12.2 – Breakdown of States by Regulatory Policy



Ages of Home School Students in Study

Figure 13.0



Continued from page 1

on test scores. Compare this to the average expenditure of \$5,325 per public school student to achieve only an average 50th percentile ranking. And these costs do not include capital expenditures (Figure 8.0).

Segmenting student test scores by family income shows that financial status is not a determinant of academic performance for home schoolers (Figure 9.0).

Home schoolers are often accused of depriving their children of socialization. To the contrary, data on home school students' activities and community involvement reveal that these children are engaged in an average of 5.2 activities outside the home, with 98% involved in two or more (Figure 10.0).

Once they graduate from high school, home schoolers closely parallel their public school counterparts, whether they pursue more formal education or enter the job market (Figure 11.0).

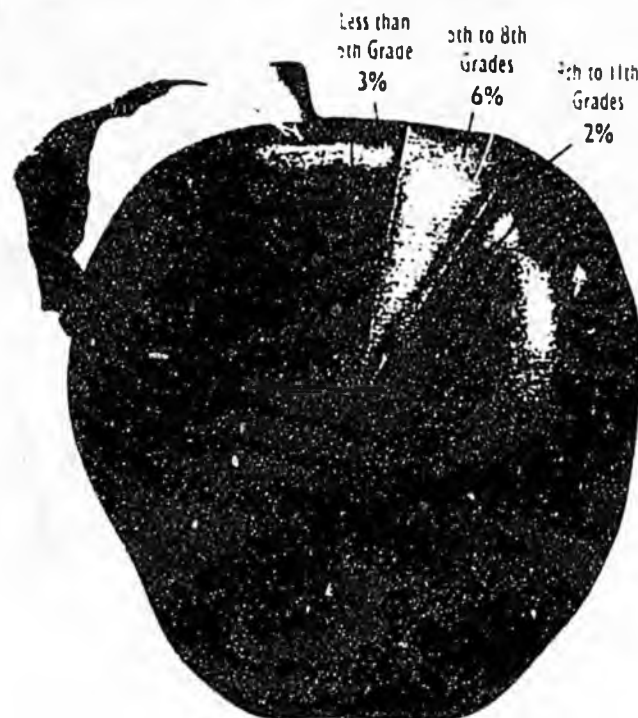
The degree of governmental regulation from state to state has no significant effect on the academic performance of home schoolers (Figure 12.1).

How enthusiastic are home school parents about their success? The vast majority (89%) intend to continue teaching their children at home all the way through high school (Figure 14.0).

This study demonstrates that home schooling works. It shows that direct parental involvement and hard work are

How Long Are They Going To Home School?

Figure 14.0 – Parents' Intent to Continue Home Education



the keys to educational success. Regardless of family income, parent education level, teacher certification, or the degree of government regulation, the scores of home educated students significantly exceed those of public school students. The results speak for themselves.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America, Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Traits, the comprehensive report on the study is available from NHERI for \$19.95 plus \$2 shipping.

National Home Education Research Institute
P.O. Box 13939
Salem, OR 97309
(503) 364-1490
e-mail: mail@nheri.org

Home School Legal Defense Association
P.O. Box 159
Paeonian Springs, VA 20129
(540) 338-5600

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 25
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR MILLER

Introduced: 2/12/96

Referred: HES

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to supporting home schooling and establishing Alaska Home Education**
2 **Week.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS** home schooling is the fastest growing educational alternative in America;
5 **and**

6 **WHEREAS** home schooling families contribute significantly to the cultural diversity
7 important to a healthy society; and

8 **WHEREAS** Alaska has a significant number of parents who teach their own children
9 at home; and

10 **WHEREAS** the state has always been a place where diversity and individualism have
11 been championed; and

12 **WHEREAS** parents who provide education for their children at home exemplify the
13 independent Alaska spirit; and

14 **WHEREAS** home schooling families tend to be strong, healthy families who
15 contribute greatly to Alaska society; and

15 **WHEREAS** the cost of educating children at home is borne by the parents, thus saving

1 money from the state general fund; and

2 **WHEREAS** home school students are proving themselves by excelling in college and
3 in the state work force; and

4 **WHEREAS** the state's home school students are increasingly being recruited by
5 colleges around the country because of their academic achievements;

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature approves of home schooling as
7 an important part of Alaska's educational infrastructure meriting state sanction and state
8 protection; and be it

9 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the right of
10 parents to choose home schooling as the education alternative best suited for their children;
11 and be it

12 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Department of Education school districts, and
13 regional educational attendance areas are encouraged to cooperate with parents who are
14 teaching their children at home; and be it

15 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Governor is respectfully requested to direct the
16 commissioner of education to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that the Department
17 of Education, school districts, and regional educational attendance areas do not unnecessarily
18 interfere with parents exercising their right to home school their children; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature establishes the week of
20 October 13 - 19, 1996, as Alaska Home Education Week.

21 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the commissioner of education, the chief
22 administrative officer of each school district and regional educational attendance area in the
23 state, and the president of the Alaska Private and Home Educators Association.

Alaska State Legislature

SENATOR

MIKE MILLER

Mailing Address:

119 N. Cushman, Suite 101

Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Ph: (907) 488-0862

Fax: (907) 488-4271



Senate

While in Juneau

State Capitol

Juneau, Alaska

99801-1182

Ph: (907) 465-4976

Fax: (907) 465-3883

Senate District 0

SCR 25
SENATOR MILLER

I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to introduce Senate Concurrent Resolution 25, which would recognize and support home schooling and establish Alaska Home Education Week.

In 1987 the Alaska Private and Home Education Association (APHEA) was founded to represent home educators throughout the state and to promote excellence in private sector home education. Each year the Association has held annual conventions and promoted the development of two local support networks for home educators throughout Alaska. In addition, the association has sponsored public information seminars, worked to protect parents' right to home educate their children, and cooperated with state education officials to ensure a broad range of educational choices for Alaska families. Currently, the Association has more than 300 member families, and it is affiliated with the National Center for Home Education.

In 1993 Governor Hickel issued a Proclamation recognizing the contributions of home educators to Alaska society, initiating a process whereby the Alaska legislature can also recognize this important segment of Alaska's educational infrastructure.

I would further like to recognize this valuable and important group and ask your support of SCR 25. This resolution would request the Governor to take whatever steps are necessary to direct the Department of Education and all other pertinent educational agencies not to unnecessarily interfere with parents exercising their right to home school their children and to establish the week of October 13-19, 1996, as Alaska Home Education Week.

This resolution has a zero fiscal note.



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SENT BY: Fred



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
 Committee on SB 134 Committee Name
 Dated 5/1/97
Bill / Subject

Thank you for considering this bill which I feel is important to families. We have been homeschooling for 5 years and feel that we are able to best provide for our children's education. With the one-on-one tutoring ability it does not take the hours of the day, nor days in the year that is needed for large classrooms. The number of days can vary from home to home & since parents are not sending their children to an outside institution, we do not need to follow the same criteria. This bill affirms the parents as the primary caregivers & decision makers in their children's lives. Last year's #s show approx 1080 homeschooling students in the FNSB, this is a low # due to the fact that many are not registered w/ the state. There

SIGNED: Lisa Sites
 Testifier

Sites Family
 Representing

257 Charles St. Fairbanks AK
 Address / Phone Number



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the

House - HESS

Committee on

SB 134

Committee Name

Dated 5-1-97

Bill / Subject

Thanks so much to Senators Leman, Miller & Phillips for introducing SB 134. We're happy that SB 134 passed unanimously in the Senate 20-0.

We were here personally to testify in support of SB 134 at the House - HESS level & we are grateful that it has once again passed unanimously. Thanks so much to our representatives Bunde, Green, Bruce, Dixon, Kempler, Porter & Uzey. You all are so very much appreciated. We've got the best Senators & Reps. in the world! (Sorry we couldn't personally talk to you all due to unforeseen circumstances.) (Our former Gov. proclaimed a Home School Day)

As we all know, Home Education is taking quantum leaps in our nation & Home Schooling is phenomenally sweeping Alaska. Charter schools are becoming more & more popular, also.

There are many reasons why the Smiths home school. We are raising our children to become free citizens and future leaders. I know my children are safe, happy and learning respect for others. I'm proud to say they score excellent on national - Benchmark testing. I obtain so much love, bonding & joy with home schooling my Melissa (age 12) & Angela (age 10).

We owe our children the best education possible and we choose to home school. All our children are very precious and I believe that education is a parent's choice. We all pay a premium for the educating of our children; I believe, about 6,400 per student per year for public education. Most of us that choose to home school make many adjustments and sacrifices since we have to budget our living expenses on one income. We owe appreciate you all making sacrifices in Juneau for all of us by being away from your precious families and so on. Again thanks for everything!

SIGNED:

Mrs Sharon Y. Smith

Testifier

Home Schooling

Representing

1017 Kodiak St. Ft. Sts., AK 99709

Address / Phone Number

P.S. Sorry I was unable to type this! Have a great summer!

which was very appropriate & appreciated



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
 Committee on SB 134 Committee Name Dated 5/1/97
Bill / Subject

It's so good to see this bill moving along. It's good to be defined "on the books". We support this bill and there are plenty of us out here "training up" our children.

Keep up the good work!
 (Our children are thriving!)

SIGNED: Ruth Leung
 Testifier

Representing
2325 - 30th Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
 Address / Phone Number 907-452-5538



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

HOUSE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the HESS

Committee on CS FOR SB 134 (HES) Dated 5-1-97
Bill / Subject Committee Name

I CAME TO TESTIFY TODAY BUT NO TESTIMONY WAS ALLOWED IN FAIRBANKS.

PLEASE SUPPORT THIS AMENDMENT TO AS 14.30.010(b) AS PROPOSED BY SENATOR LEMAN.

RESEARCH INDICATES THAT HOMESCHOOLED CHILDREN FARE MORE FAVORABLY THAN THEIR PEERS PROVIDED IN PUBLIC SCHOOL AS DEMONSTRATED WITH REGARD TO RECEIVING AN ADEQUATE EDUCATION. THIS STATEMENT IS BASED ON RESULTS OF STANDARDIZED TESTS USED AS AN ACADEMIC BENCHMARK BY BOTH GROUPS. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE SAME RESEARCH SHOWS THAT A COLLEGE EDUCATION FOR THE PARENTS IS NOT NECESSARY FOR SUCCESSFUL TEACHING OF CHILDREN. PLEASE FOLLOW THROUGH WITH THIS LEGISLATION TO SEE THAT IT IS PASSED. PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE RESEARCH SUMMARY.

SIGNED:

Testifier

Vince Meurloy
VINCE MEURLOY

Representing

596 ARVITA CT FAIRBANKS, AK 99712
Address / Phone Number



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House
HESS
 Committee on Senate Bill 134(HES) Dated May 1, 1997
 Bill / Subject Committee Name

I have been educating my children at home under a Christian school umbrella. I would appreciate the addition of section 12, because I am a parent teacher. I do not have an education degree, but my children are tested yearly with the SAT or Iowa Basic Test. They have done very well at home. Their scores come up for every year they are at home and they are all 3 to 4 years ahead of their grade level. For our family, home education is the best alternative.

SIGNED: Annie Meurlott
 Testifier

Interior Homeschoolers
 Representing

596 Arvita Ct. Fairbanks AK 99712
 Address / Phone Number 456-2722



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Hess
 Committee on SB 134 SB 134 Dated 5/1/97
 Bill / Subject Committee Name

Hello,

My name is Deanna Meyer and I would like to thank Senator Lemar for introducing Senate Bill 134. My husband and I have been homeschooling our children for the past eight years and we are very pleased with their progress. We are very thankful that we are able to continue homeschooling our children. We support this bill as we believe it is time for us as homeschool families are acknowledged as a separate entity by the law.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who isⁿ legislation taking a stand for family values.

Thanks Again

SIGNED:

Deanna J. Meyer

Testifier

Meyer Elementary School (The Meyer Family)

Representing

P.O. Box 55751 North Pole Ak. 99705 907-488-2331

Address / Phone Number



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House HESS
 Committee on SB 134 Committee Name Dated 5-1-97
Bill / Subject

WE HAVE BEEN HOMESCHOOLING OUR DAUGHTER ^(10 yr old.) SINCE AGE 3 WHEN SHE FIRST SHOWED AN INTEREST AND ABILITY IN READING. TODAY SHE TESTS FAR BEYOND HER GRADE LEVEL IN READING + LANGUAGE ~~SKILLS~~ SKILLS AND ABOVE AVERAGE IN HER OTHER SUBJECTS. WE ARE PLEASED WITH HER PROGRESS AND IS A WELL ADJUSTED ACTIVE TEN OLD. I PLAN TO HOME SCHOOL HER AS LONG AS IT SERVES HER EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. ~~WE~~ WE ARE PLEASED THAT THIS LEGISLATION HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AND SUPPORT IT WHOLEHEARTEDLY IT FINALLY MAKES OUR EFFORTS AS HOMESCHOOLERS LEGITIMATE. ~~instead of~~

Thank you.

NOTE: We were present for a teleconference on MAY 1, 1997 But did not get to testify as they allowed no testimony.

SIGNED: KRISTIN M. WAGAR *Kristin Wagar*
 Testifier
Self.
 Representing
1897 Badger Rd. NORRIT POLE, AK 99705
 Address / Phone Number 907-488-1601



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Hess
 Committee on SB 134 Committee Name Dated 5-1-97
Bill / Subject

I was here on behalf of my family to testify in favor of SB 134 and to thank Senators German, Miller and Phillips for this Bill and the representatives also in support of this Bill.

Thank you,

My husband too!
 Keith who could
 not be here!

SIGNED: Donna Buchanan
 Testifier
Home School
 Representing
423 Taurus Rd, Fbks, Ak 99712
 Address / Phone Number



APHEA

Alaska Private & Home Educators Assoc.
P.O. Box 141764 • Anchorage, AK 99514

**Testimony of Jack E. Phelps, Vice President
Alaska Private & Home Educators Association**

**In support of SB 134
Offered to the House HESS Committee**

May 1, 1997

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee:

My name is Jack Phelps, and today I am testifying on behalf of the Alaska Private & Home Educators Association (APHEA), a non-profit educational corporation serving the home school community throughout Alaska. APHEA was founded in 1987, and currently has a membership of about 450 home schooling families in all parts of the state. It is governed by an elected board of directors of which I am currently vice president.

Robert Nesbitt in his famous book, *Megatrends*, mentioned home school as part of society's trend toward decentralization, and as a sign of increased personal responsibility. It is that and more. It has been called the fastest growing educational phenomenon in modern America. Estimates run as high as 2.5 million American school age children being educated by their parents, representing the full range of educational philosophies, and crossing all social and economic strata. Patricia Lines, a researcher for the U.S. Department of Education, estimated the number at over a million several years ago, and it has continued to grow in the years since.

Home taught children are widely recognized as well educated and socially successful young people. They are now sought and recruited by many of the nation's best colleges and universities. Several books have been published in recent years acknowledging their successes and their unique contribution to American society. Several states, notable among them Michigan and Arizona, have

recently acted to protect home schools and to codify their role in the range of educational options. In fact, the bill which you have before you today is patterned on the law passed in Michigan last year.

Last year, the Alaska legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 24 (now 1996 Legislative Resolve #53) without a single dissenting vote. That put this body clearly on record asserting the importance of home schooling to Alaska families and the value of home schooling to Alaska society. SB 134 codifies that stand and will encourage the responsible activities of the Alaska home school community.

The APHEA board of directors supports SB 134 because we believe it will establish Alaska in the forefront of those progressive states which strongly support this option for parents who choose to take a direct and personal hand in the education of their children. Alaska parents who are teaching their children at home are contributing to Alaska society by preparing their children for the full range of workforce opportunities, and they are doing it at no cost to the state general fund because they bear the full expense themselves.

As the sponsor has pointed out in his sponsor statement, SB 134 is needed because under the current statutes home school families have to pretend they are regular, private day schools, and file all the paperwork attendant upon operating such a school, or they have to enroll in a state or district sponsored correspondence program which may work well for some, but clearly limits the options for others. Another option is for them to seek exemption from the local district under a cumbersome process that subjects them to unwelcome and unnecessary work and scrutiny. This route is particularly unacceptable because there are no uniform standards governing whether they will be granted the exemption. Making home school parents depend on the whim of the local school boards and the various superintendents is no way for the state to encourage and support the kind of personal responsibility being taken by those who choose to teach their own children at home. CSSB 134(HESS) would establish a very simple and uniform exemption, and allow home school parents to get on with the business of teaching their children.

SB 134 is good public policy. It is good for children and it is good for the state. It makes a very clear statement that Alaska recognizes the value of personal liberty, personal responsibility and academic freedom. Each of your constituencies will be well-served by the immediate passage of this legislation. I urge you to move it from committee as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today. I will be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.



APHEA

Alaska Private & Home Educators Assoc.
P.O. Box 141764 • Anchorage, AK 99514

April 9, 1997

The Honorable Loren Leman
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Leman:


Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 134, relating to home schooling in Alaska. Coming on the heels of last year's Senate Concurrent Resolution 25, which passed both houses unanimously, SB 134 is the next logical step in Alaska asserting the value and importance of home schooling as a part of our overall education system.

As you know, the Alaska Private & Home Educators Association (APHEA) has, for more than a decade, worked to keep home schooling families in Alaska free from unnecessary interference and to help home school parents do their job well. APHEA sponsors seminars and coordinates the efforts of a network of local home school support groups throughout the state. It also works with the Department of Education and with local officials to help clarify the status of home school families, when necessary.

The APHEA board of directors supports SB 134 because it will clearly establish the status of home schooling as a legitimate part of Alaska's educational infrastructure, and not merely as a subset of private day schools. The several provisions of AS 14.30.010 treat home schoolers as either private schools or special cases. For example, AS 14.30.010 (b)(11) allows a parent to demonstrate to the local school board that a child is "equally well-served" by a home schooling program, and thereby excused from compulsory attendance. Such provisions are cumbersome and difficult, and are contrary to the assumption established by the Supreme Court in *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* that parents have the right to direct the education of their children.

Alaska is a state that has long treasured the independent spirit, self sufficiency and cultural diversity. Home school families exemplify those qualities. They are contributing to society well-rounded, well-educated children at no cost to the state. The academic track record of home school children is enviable. Many home-taught Alaska children have gone on to excel at some of the nation's best colleges, and many are in the Alaska workforce. The Alaska legislature should join other states, like Michigan and Arizona, in codifying its support for the home school community.

Sincerely,


Jack E. Phelps
Vice President

SUPPORT

Apr. 10, 1997

Dear Senator Luman,

My oldest daughter was in homeschool for kindergarten, third, and seventh grades and graduated with honors as valedictorian last year at Grace Christian School. I have known many homeschool families and in every case, the parents ^{have been} able to recognize if the homeschool is meeting the educational needs of their children and make changes if it is not.

I support SB 134 but without the phrase "organized education" because of the possibility of differing interpretations of what is organized. Parents should be allowed to make decisions about their children's education and able to homeschool without regulation.

Because being a homeschool teacher does require a sacrifice of time and money, homeschool parents are committed to excellence in education.

Sincerely,

Jan DeLand

Jan DeLand
2303 E. 49th Ct.
Anchorage, AK 99507

Senator Loren Leman,

I have been very excited to learn of SB 134! The freedom to educate our children according to our beliefs is of utmost importance to my husband and I. There are also so many resources available to provide our children with a first rate education without some of the drawbacks involved with the available institutions. I have high hopes that Alaska will become a more user friendly state for homeschoolers. This legislation is in my opinion exactly what we need. Also I would be in favor of the deletion of the organized educational program phrase. Thank you very much for the time and effort you have taken to give parents greater freedom in their efforts to give their children the best education possible.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Caroline Smardo

April 10, 1997

Senator Loren Leman
Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee
Fax No. 465-3810

Dear Senator Leman:

I am writing in support of SB 134. My husband is an Anchorage business owner who travels frequently. We have been homeschooling our two daughters for almost seven years. Homeschooling has provided the academic freedom and excellence which we desired for our children, and the flexibility my husband's business schedule has required.

This bill will guard and strengthen the freedom all Alaskan parents have to educate their children with each child's best interests in mind. I greatly appreciate your efforts in sponsoring this bill, and look forward to its passage.

Sincerely,

Anne M. Kincaid

Anne M. Kincaid
19208 McCrary
Eagle River, AK 99577

To: All committee members regarding homeschooling:

From: Robin and Gretchen Bogard
Box 7362
Nikiski, Ak. 99635 phone 776-5768

I urge your support for any bills which strengthen the rights of parents to homeschool their children.

My wife and I are both lifetime Alaskans. We are the proud parents of 4 young daughters, all of them also born here in Alaska. We are homeschooling them, and plan on continuing to do so. An annual S.A.T. for each child is part of our routine. We are committed and responsible parents. I believe that as taxpayers, we should have access for our children to make use of the public school facilities. I also highly favor what was once termed the "voucher system," where the same tax dollars appropriated to public schools for each child could be used for homeschooling.

Dear Senator Leman,

Please support the ammendment to SB 134 that would delete the phrase about "organized educational program ect. ect." This most recent proposed amendment sounds great!

Sincerely,

John and Carol Broussard

10 April 1997

Sen. Loren Leman
Alaska State Capitol
Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Leman:

As a former home schooling parent and one presently most interested in Christian education, I fully support Senate Bill 134.

It is my considered judgement that Senate Bill will be a major step along the road to educational freedom. Current Exemptions apply only to private schools. If some home schoolers are "taking refuge" under this exemption it could possibly result in an infringement on their liberties. The wisdom of SB 134 is that it EXEMPTS home schoolers as home schoolers.

The Alaska Constitution is flawed in that it gives the state a role in education. That needs to be changed. However, we need to deal with the de facto situation. In other words, what must be done to proceed along the road to educational freedom? How can we improve our situation? All battles are not won in one encounter. SB 134 does not "win it all" but is definitely a step in the right direction.

The concern that the requirements that parents follow a program which contains reading, spelling, etc.etc. will invite bureaucrats into the home schooling scene is unfounded. The bill makes no provision for enforcement by the State or any sanctions. A home schooling parent would be more secure under the provisions of SB 134 than they are at the present. Moreover, similar measures in other states have increased liberty of home schoolers--not restricted them.

Thank you for your concern in this vital area of guarding and improving our educational freedom.

Most sincerely,

Donnis Walters
Donnis Walters
13209 Brant Way
Anchorage Alaska 99515

April 10, 1997

Dear Senator,

I would like to register my support of the ^{Board of Education} amendment to Senate Bill 134. I believe the amendment is a further support of parental rights.

Thank-you for your concern for our children whom we love and cherish so dearly. They are the future of Alaska and the future of this great nation. We seek to turn them over to our future as strong and moral leaders. Thank-you for helping us do this.

Sincerely,

Mary Nichols
205 BIRCH ST. - Kenai

April 10, 1997

Dear Senator,

I am writing in support of the amendment to SB 134. I feel this amendment will make the bill an even stronger advocate for homeschooling families.

Thank you for your support and effort in passing SB 134.

A Concerned Voter and Homeschooler,

Laura E. Mene

119 Naida

Kenai, AK 99611

(907) 283-2729

Jennifer M. Caeton
P.O.Box 110486
Anchorage, AK 99511

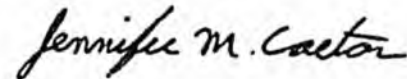
April 10, 1997

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a homeschool graduate and am writing to express my strong support of SB 134, as well as the amendment that would delete the following language : "...and is receiving an organized educational program that includes reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, literature, writing, and English grammar."

I would also strongly support an amendment that stated "is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal guardian."

Sincerely,



Jennifer M. Caeton

Anthony J. Caeton IV
P.O.Box 110486
Anchorage, AK 99511

April 10, 1997

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a homeschool graduate and am writing to express my strong support of 3B 134, as well as the amendment that would delete the following language : "...and is receiving an organized educational program that includes reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, literature, writing, and English grammar."

I would also strongly support an amendment that stated "Is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal guardian."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anthony J. Caeton IV".

Anthony J. Caeton IV

Emma M. Caeton
P.O.Box 110486
Anchorage, AK 99511

April 10, 1997

To Whom It May Concern,

As a parent I am writing to express my strong support of SB 134, as well as the amendment that would delete the following language : "...and is receiving an organized educational program that includes reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, literature, writing, and English grammar."

I would also strongly support an amendment that stated "Is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal guardian."

Sincerely,

Emma M. Caeton
Emma M. Caeton

April 10, 1997

Dear Senator Lehman,

Thank you for introducing SB 134 so that Alaska's education statutes will clearly recognize homeschooling as a legitimate and highly effective option.

This bill is similar to one that passed in March of 1996, in the state of Michigan. According to Homeschool Legal Defense Association this bill has cut 95% of the calls to their office concerning homeschool conflict in that state. HSLDA highly recommends this bill.

As long-term homeschooling parents, we have 2 graduates

and 6 more to come, we
feel this bill will help
secure the future for
homeschooling in Alaska.

We strongly urge the
HESS committee to support
SB 134.

Sincerely,

Raymond Speckel
Debra A. Speckel
HC 60, Box 226
Copper Center, Alaska
99573

822-3464 phone & fax

P.O. Box 670551
Chugiak, AK 99567
April 10, 1997

Dear Senator Leman,

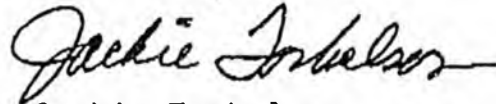
Thank you for introducing S.B. 134. As a long-time home schooler (10 years), I appreciate your work and that of others who recognize home schooling as a viable option in Alaska.

Of my eleven children, two have graduated and are doing fine. In fact, you know my son, Peter Torkelson. He home schooled his last three semesters of high school. He did very well at UAH with almost a straight A average.

I am sometimes anxious about the future of home schooling and see this bill as a positive step in assuring our rights as parents to choose the education that we feel would best meet the needs of our children.

Thank you again and you have my whole-hearted support for S.B. 134.

Sincerely,



Jackie Torkelson

Dear Senator Leman,

We are homeschooling our children, now teenagers, and support your efforts on our behalf as represented by SB 134. We will gladly assist you in any particular type of input that you need. Please let us know.

May God continue to bless your efforts.

Jon Ruth
Jonathan and Ruth Ewig
2325-30th Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
phone/fax: 452-5538

3-22-97

APRIL 10, 1997

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SENATE HESS COMMITTEE

DEAR SIR:

PLEASE SUPPORT BILL SB-134. HOMESCHOOLING IS A GREAT WAY TO TEACH CHILDREN. THEY LEARN FASTER AND MORE IN A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. THEY CAN WORK AT THEIR OWN SPEED, EX: DOING HOMEWORK AHEAD. UNLIKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, MY HOMESCHOOLERS HAVE TO FINISH EACH BOOK TO GET CREDIT FOR THAT SUBJECT EVEN IF IT TAKES THEM INTO THE SUMMER TO DO IT.

THANK YOU,

SINCERELY,

KEITH & DONNA BUCHANAN
423 TAURUS RD.
FAIRBANKS, AK. 99712
PHONE & FAX: 1 907/457-4285

P.S. THANK YOU SENATOR LEMAN

April 10, 1997

Dear Senator Leman,

Regarding: Senate Bill 134

As parents of two homeschooled children, we support SB 134. We appreciate your efforts to make education at home a legal option.

Sincerely,

**Tom & Robin Coursen
HC 01 Box 3915
Sterling, Alaska 99672
(907) 262-6347**

April 10, 1997

Senator Loren Leman
Member of Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Senate

Dear Senator Leman,

I was informed by your office of SB 134, which would add to the state statutes a further exemption for parents who wish to educate their children independently of the public school system in Alaska. I wish to state that I am in favor of passing this bill. I think it would offer a wonderful alternative for parents who presently don't fit into any of the other exemptions, but who are diligently educating their children in a responsible and organized manner.

I would prefer to see the wording, "is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal guardian", rather than the wording "is receiving an organized educational program that includes reading ... grammar." The former wording would not cause concern as to who may be deciding what an "organized educational program" is, and leaves that to the parent's discretion. As the primary teachers in our children's lives, my husband and I wish to remain the ones that decide what is in their best interest in regards to educational curriculum. We are certified teachers, and plan on remaining certified, so we are already included in the present state statutes, but we think this additional amendment would benefit others who don't fit as neatly into a present exemption.

Thank you for your efforts, and your confidence in us as educators. I hope to see your continued support for responsible homeschooling families in Alaska. We appreciate the relative freedom that the State of Alaska allows us, and hope that it maintains this positive atmosphere for us and other families in the future.

Sincerely,

Ramona Henspeter

Ramona Henspeter
P.O. Box 98
Copper Center, AK 99573

April 11, 1997

Dear Senator Leman,

We have been homeschooling for four years and planned to continue. We believe SB 134 is very valuable as it defines a parent's right to educate their children. You have our enthusiastic support on this bill.

Sincerely,

**Steve and Janice Habermann
HC 1 Box 161C
Soldotna, Alaska 99669
(907)262-3704**