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SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

First Committee of Referral

DATE: 3/12/97

FURTHER:

Date of 5-Day Notice: 4/3/97
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 4/11/97

HESS Committee considered

SENATE BILL NO. 134

"An Act relating to home schooling for elementary and secondary students."

and recommends:

be replaced with CS SB134 (HES)

adopt previous CS ()

attached amendment(s)

adopt Letter of Intent by Committee

further referral to the Committee

Senate Bill:
 same title
 new title
House Bill:
 same title
 technical title
 new: SCR#

SIGNING DQ PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	NR	DNP	AM
<i>Angie Ward</i>	✓				
<i>Brian D. Leman</i>	✓				
<i>Syde Green</i>	✓				
CHAIR:		CHAIR: <i>Gar, Weller</i>	✓		

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal
Education	4/10/97	✓	
(This FN applies to SB134 + CSSB134(HES))			

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):*

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal

APPROPRIATION -- no fiscal note

*include fiscal notes accompanying Governor's bill

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB 134

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						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGES IN REVENUES						
----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

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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CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 134()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

Offered:

Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS LEMAN, Miller, Phillips

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to home schooling for elementary and secondary students."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 *** Section 1. AS 14.30.010(b) is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:**

4 **(12) is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal**

5 **guardian.**



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. This bill requires students be instructed in: reading, spelling, mathematics, science, history, civics, literature, writing, and English grammar.

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 14.45.010 (b)(11)). Neither provision was designed with home schoolers in mind. SB 134 will correct this.

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.



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:

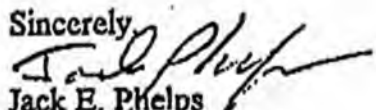
Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 134, relating to home schooling in Alaska. Coming on the heels of last year's Senate Concurrent Resolution 25, which passed both houses unanimously, SB 134 is the next logical step in Alaska asserting the value and importance of home schooling as a part of our overall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

Darren A. Jones
Home School Legal Defense Association
P.O. Box 159
Paeonian Springs, VA 20129

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

April 2, 1997

Dear Senator Leman:

I apologize for the delay in getting back to you. I hope that the information in this letter helps.

We feel that having a specific home school statute which is friendly to families can help home schoolers in several ways. First, in some states such as Alaska, home schooling is not specifically mentioned in the law. Instead, parents are given the options of a private tutor (who must be a certified teacher) or a religious or private school. Most of our members qualify under one or more provisions of the law; however, there is some uncertainty at times as to whether they are actually in compliance with the law.

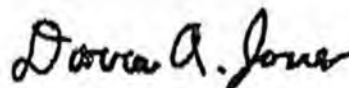
Second, a home school statute clarifies the intent of the legislature to recognize the constitutional right of parents to educate their children. This right has been recognized by the Supreme Court of the United States on several occasions. It displays the confidence of the legislature that parents are assumed to make the best educational choice for their children.

Third, a home school statute relaxing the restrictions which have been placed upon parents would fit the national trend of deregulation in the area of home schooling. Many states, including Arizona, Michigan, and Arkansas, have recently passed laws reducing the red tape with which home schoolers must comply.

Fourth, a home school statute that does not institute burdensome requirements on parents accords well with Alaska's history as a freedom-loving state. Government is restricted to its proper role, and parental freedom is enhanced.

I trust that this letter is sufficiently responsive to your needs. If you have any further questions, please feel free to call.

Very truly yours,



Darren A. Jones

Article

3. Education for Exceptional Children (§§ 14.30.180 — 14.30.360)
4. Health and Safety Education (§§ 14.30.360, 14.30.370)
5. Environmental Education (§ 14.30.380)
6. Bilingual-Bicultural Education (§§ 14.30.400, 14.30.410)
7. Adventure-Based Education (§§ 14.30.500)
8. Alaska Student Leadership Development Fund (§ 14.30.610)
9. Special Education Service Agency (§§ 14.30.600 — 14.30.660)
10. Records of Certain Missing or Transferred Children (§§ 14.30.700 — 14.30.720)
11. Alaska School Counseling Program Grant Fund (§ 14.30.750)

Article 1. Compulsory Education.

Section

10. When attendance compulsory
20. Violations
30. Prevention and reduction of truancy

Section

45. Grounds for suspension or denial of admission
47. Admission or readmission when cause no longer exists

Collateral references. — 68 Am. Jur. 2d Schools, § 216 et seq.
78A C.J.S. Schools and School Districts, §§ 734-739.

Teacher's civil liability for administering corporal punishment. 43 ALR2d 469.

Regulations as to fraternities and similar associations connected with educational institution. 10 ALR3d 389.

Student organization registration statement, filed with public school or state university or college, as open to inspection by public. 37 ALR3d 1311.

What constitutes a private, parochial, or denominational school within statute making attendant at such school a compliance with compulsory school attendance law. 65 ALR3d 1222.

Student's right to compel school officials to issue degree, diploma, or the like. 11 ALR4th 1182.

Sec. 14.30.010. When attendance compulsory. (a) Every child between seven and 16 years of age shall attend school at the public school in the district in which the child resides during each school term. Every parent, guardian or other person having the responsibility for or control of a child between seven and 16 years of age shall maintain the child in attendance at a public school in the district in which the child resides during the entire school term, except as provided in (b) of this section.

(b) This section does not apply if a child

(1) is provided an academic education comparable to that offered by the public schools in the area, either by

(A) attendance at a private school in which the teachers are certificated according to AS 14.20.020;

(B) tutoring by personnel certificated according to AS 14.20.020; or

(C) attendance at an educational program operated in compliance with AS 14.45.100 — 14.45.200 by a religious or other private school;

(2) attends a school operated by the federal government;

(3) has a physical or mental condition that a competent medical authority determines will make attendance impractical;

(4) is in the custody of a court or law enforcement authorities;

(5) is temporarily ill or injured;

(6) has been suspended or denied admittance according to AS 14.30.045;

(7) resides more than two miles from either a public school or a route on which transportation is provided by the school authorities, except that this subsection does not apply if the child resides within two miles of a federal or private school that the child is eligible and able to attend;

(8) is excused by action of the school board of the district at a regular meeting or by the district superintendent subject to approval by the school board of the district at the next regular meeting;

(9) has completed the 12th grade;

(10) is enrolled in

(A) the state boarding school established under AS 14.10; or

(B) a full-time program of correspondence study approved by the department; in those school districts providing an approved correspondence study program, a student may be enrolled either in the district correspondence program or in the centralized correspondence study program;

(11) is equally well-served by an educational experience approved by the school board as serving the child's educational interests despite an absence from school, the request for excuse is made in writing by the child's parents or guardian, and approved by the principal or administrator of the school that the child attends. (§ 37-7-1 ACLA 1949; am § 36 ch 98 SLA 1966; am § 5 ch 71 SLA 1972; am § 5 ch 190 SLA 1975; am § 1 ch 30 SLA 1976; am § 1 ch 10 SLA 1977; am § 4 ch 126 SLA 1978; am § 3 ch 11 SLA 1984; am § 1 ch 78 SLA 1987; am § 4 ch 73 SLA 1988)

NOTES TO DECISIONS

Quoted in L.A.M. v. State, 547 P.2d 827 (Alaska 1976).
Stated in In re S.D., 549 P.2d 1190 (Alaska 1978).

Cited in Matthews v. Quinton, 382 P.2d 932 (Alaska 1961); D.R.C. v. State, 646 P.2d 252 (Alaska Ct. App. 1982).

Collateral references. — Religious beliefs of parents as defense to prosecution for failure to comply with compulsory attendance law. 3 ALR2d 1401.

Applicability of compulsory attendance law covering children of a specified age, with respect to a child who has passed the anniversary date of such age. 73 ALR2d 874.

Power of public school authorities to set minimum

or maximum age requirements for pupils in absence of specific statutory authority. 78 ALR2d 1021.

Residence for purpose of admission to public school. 83 ALR2d 497; 68 ALR3d 641.

What constitutes a private, parochial, or denominational school within statute making attendance at such school a compliance with compulsory school attendance law. 65 ALR3d 1222.

Sec. 14.30.020. Violations. A person who knowingly fails to comply with AS 14.30.010 is guilty of a violation. Each five days of unlawful absence under AS 14.30.010 is a separate violation. (§ 37-7-2 ACLA 1949; am § 37 ch 98 SLA 1966; am § 2 ch 78 SLA 1987)

CROSS REFERENCES. — For fines for violations, see AS 12.55.035.

Sec. 14.30.030. Prevention and reduction of truancy. The governing body of a school district, including a regional educational attendance area, shall establish procedures to prevent and reduce truancy. (§ 37-7-3 ACLA 1949; am § 1 ch 32 SLA 1949; am § 38 ch 98 SLA 1966; am § 55 ch 6 SLA 1984; am § 23 ch 85 SLA 1988; am § 3 ch 59 SLA 1996)

Effect of amendments. — The 1996 amendment, effective September 10, 1996, rewrote this section.

Sec. 14.30.040. Extension of provisions to United States public schools for aborigines. [Repealed, § 59 ch 98 SLA 1966.]

Sec. 14.30.045. Grounds for suspension or denial of admission. A school age child may be suspended from or denied admission to the public school that the child is otherwise entitled to attend only for the following causes:

(1) continued wilful disobedience or open and persistent defiance of reasonable school authority;

(2) behavior that is inimicable to the welfare, safety, or morals of other pupils or a person employed or volunteering at the school;

HOME EDUCATION

Across the United States



"There are two—and only two—keys to educational success: hard work and parental involvement," says Michael Farris, 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 three percentile points (88 v. 85—Figure 4.0).

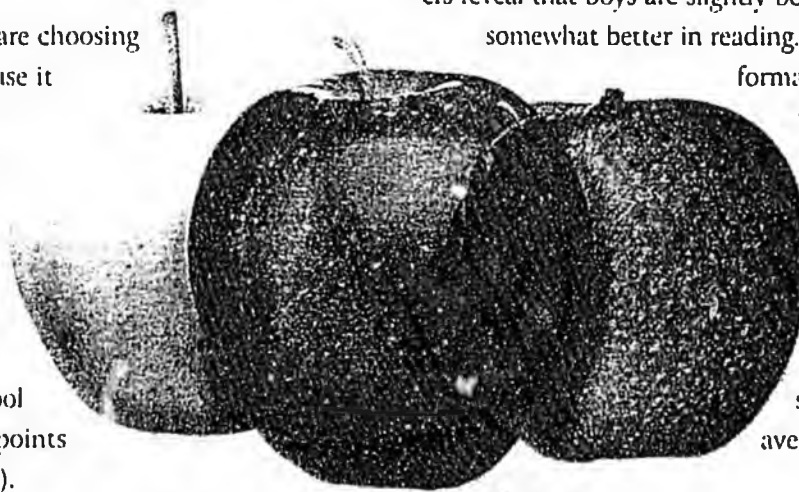
The study also shows that home schooling parents' educational level has no practical significant effect on their children's academic performance (Figure 5.1). For public school students, however, a parents' educational level does affect their child's performance (Figures 5.2 & 5.3). In eighth grade math, 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 \$546 spent per home school student yields an average 85th percentile ranking

Continued on page 6

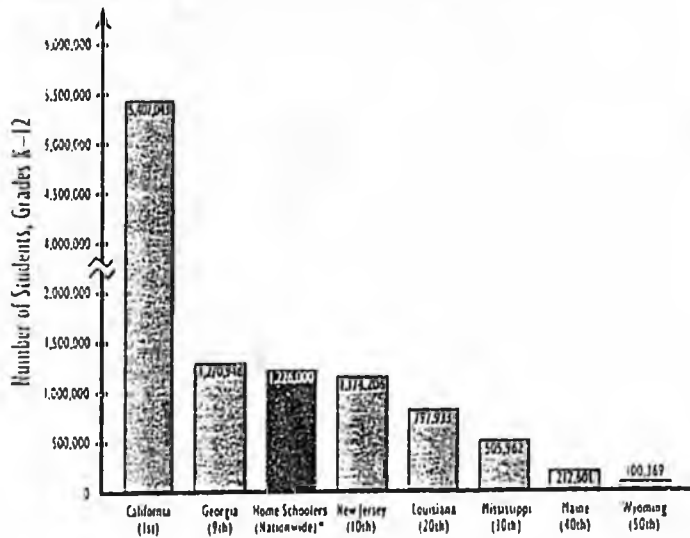


an executive summary provided by

HOME SCHOOL LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION

How Many Home Schoolers Are There?

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

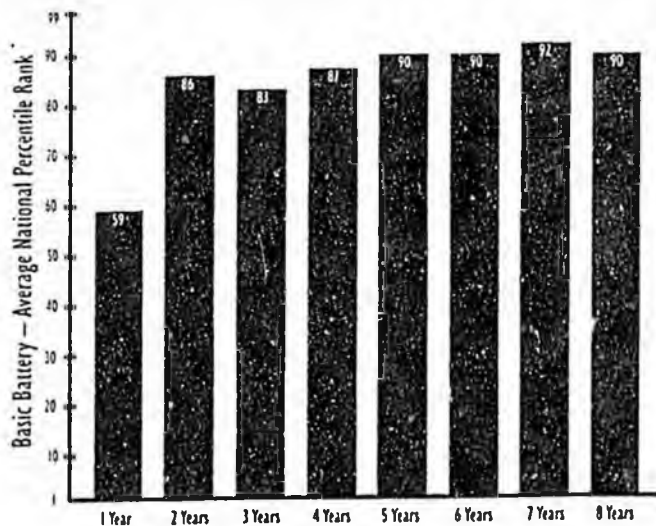


Footnote: * This study calculated that there were 1.23 million home schoolers in the U.S. during the fall of 1996. The estimated margin of error for this calculation is +/- 10%, yielding a range of 1,103,000 to 1,348,000. This is similar to the total public school enrollment of Georgia or New Jersey (ranked 9th and 10th largest respectively among state public school populations nationwide).

Public school state enrollment figures are for 1994 and the most recent available, based on data from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (1996, November). *Digest of Education Statistics (1996)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

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

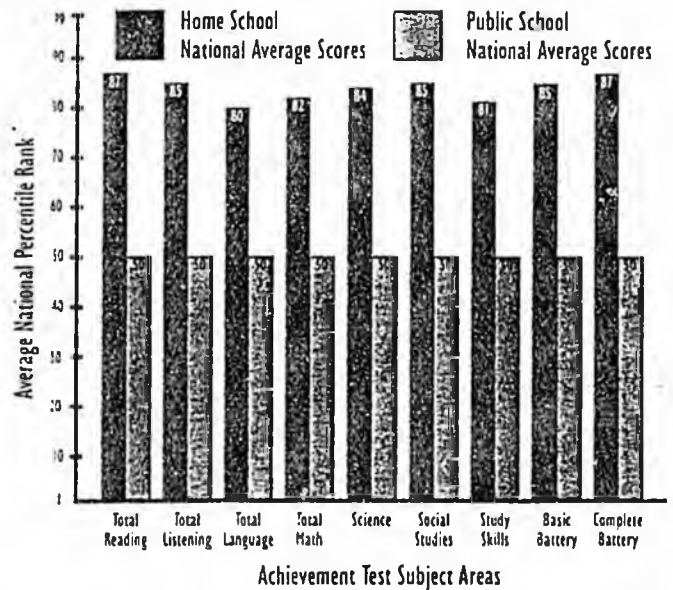
Figure 3.0 – Achievement for Eighth Grade Home Schoolers Segmented by Years Taught at Home



Footnote: * See Ray (1997) for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

How Do Home School Students Score?

Figure 2.0

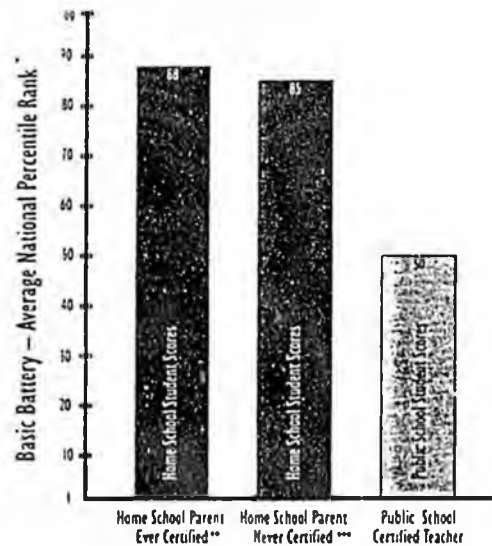


Footnote: Data collected for standardized academic achievement tests for the 1994-95 academic year.

* For more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale, see the complete study by Brian D. Ray, *Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America: Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Trends*. (1997). Paeonian Springs, VA: Home School Legal Defense Association.

Is Teacher Certification Necessary for High Achievement?

Figure 4.0



Footnote: * See Ray (1997) for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

** Either parent ever certified.
 *** Neither parent ever certified.

Does Parent Education Level Predict Student Achievement?

For Home Schoolers: **NO!**

For Public Schoolers: **YES!**

Figure 5.1 – Home School Achievement – Basic Battery Test

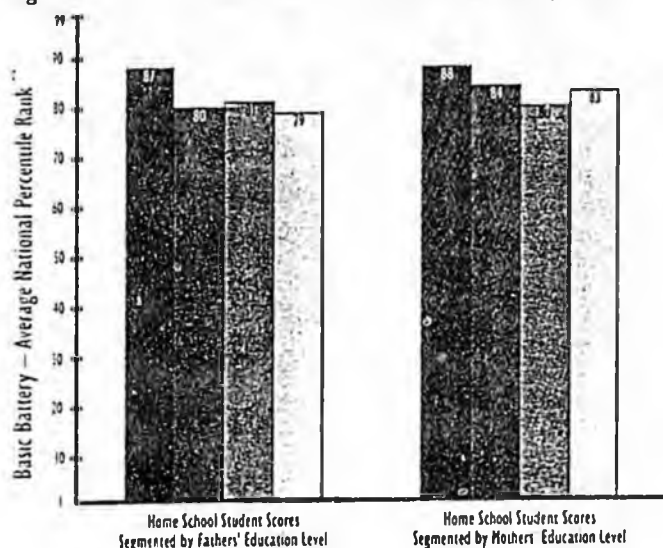


Figure 5.2 – Public School Achievement – Writing Test

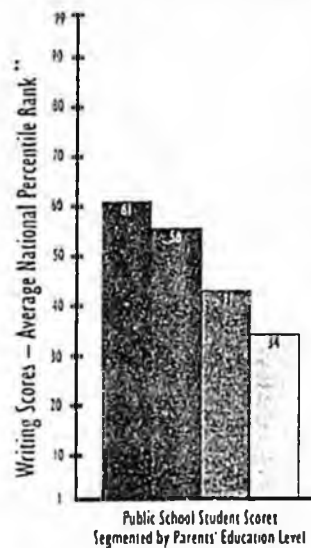
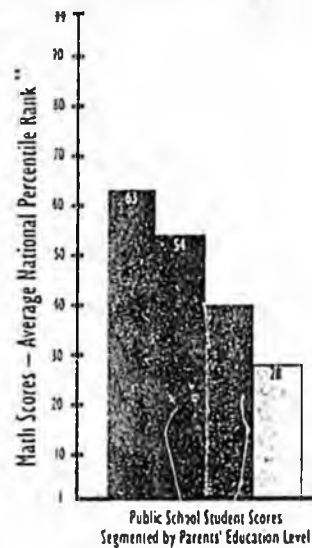


Figure 5.3 – Public School Achievement – Math Test



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

- Graduated College
- Some Education after High School
- Graduated High School
- Less than High School Education

Footnote: Public school achievement figures are for eighth grade based on tables from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (1996, November), *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) trends in academic progress* (trends report and appendices). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Home school achievement figures are for grades K–12.
 * Basic battery achievement test scores not available for public school students.
 ** See Ray (1997) for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

How Do Minorities Fare in Home Education?

Figure 6.1 – Race Relationship to Reading Test Scores

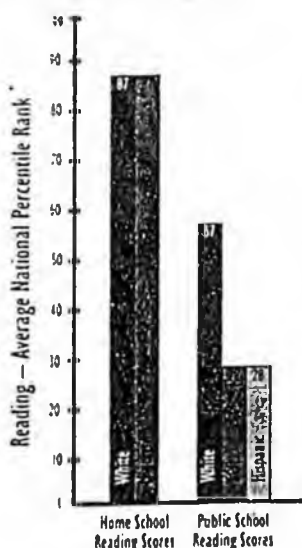
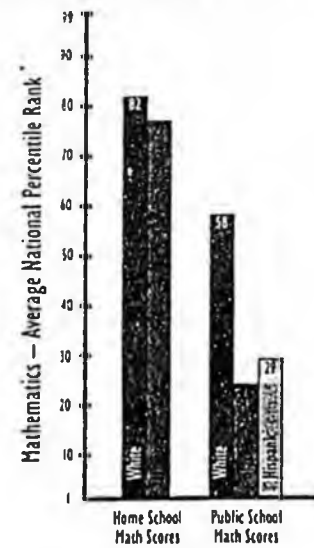


Figure 6.2 – Race Relationship to Mathematics Test Scores

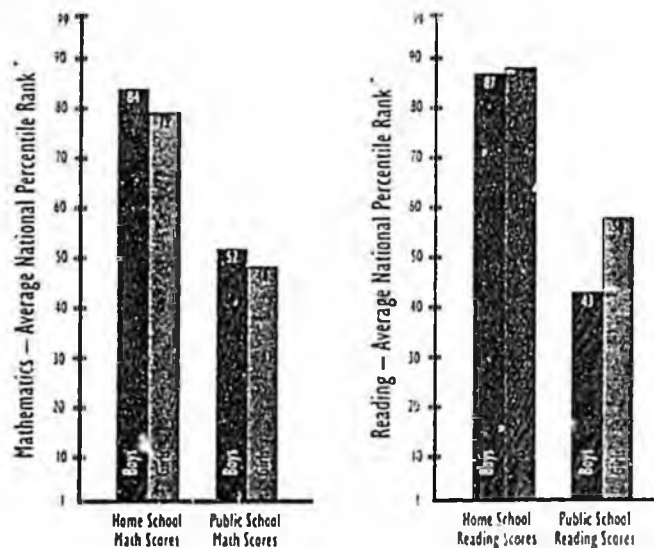


Footnote: Public school achievement figures are for eighth grade based on tables from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research & Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics (1996, November), *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) trends in academic progress* (trends report and appendices). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

* See Ray (1997) for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

What About the Gender Gap in Academics?

Figure 7.0

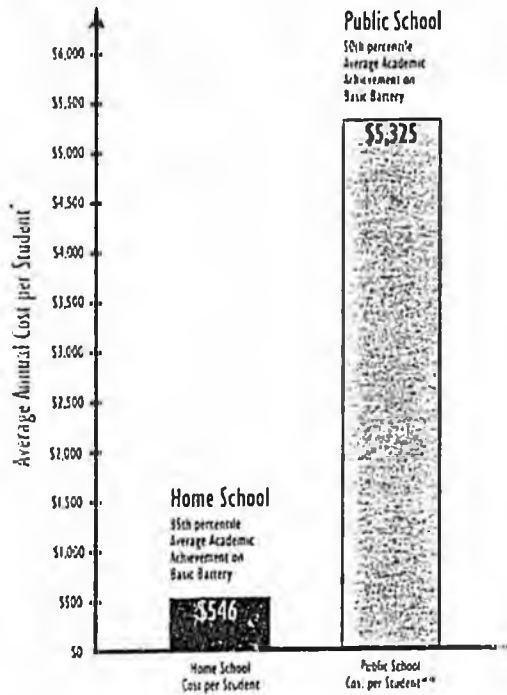


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* See Ray (1997) for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

Does Spending Correlate with Achievement?

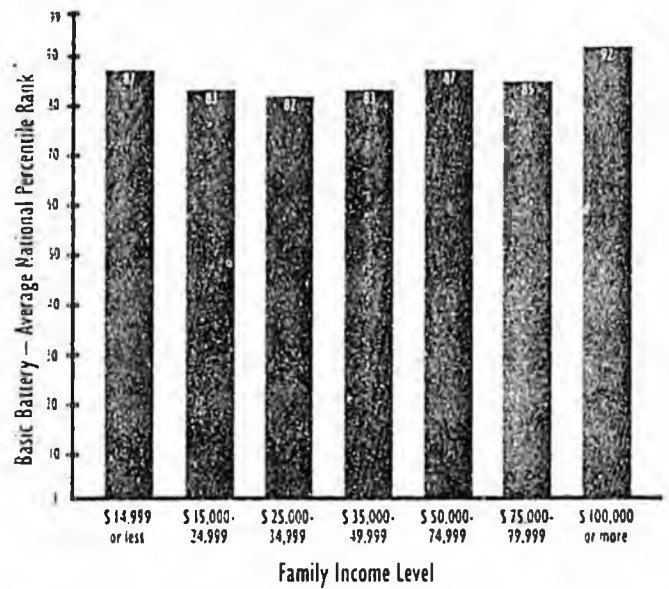
Figure 8.0



Footnote: * All cost-per-student amounts in this figure exclude capital costs.
 ** United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (1996), *Statistics in Brief, June 1996: Revenues and expenditures for public elementary and secondary education: School year 1993-1994*. [From: Common core of data: National public education financial survey.] Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

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

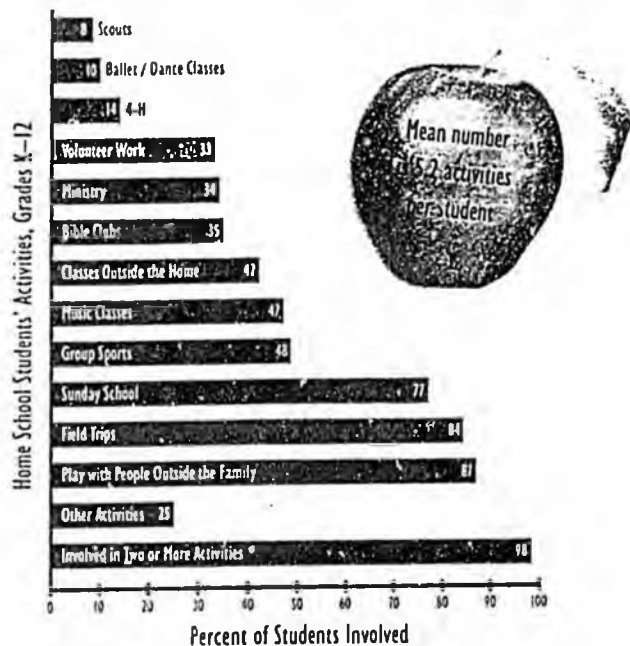
Figure 9.0 – No Impact on Achievement



Footnote: * See Ray (1997) for more detail about the non-equal-interval nature of a simple percentile scale which has distortion especially near the ends of the scale.

What About Socialization?

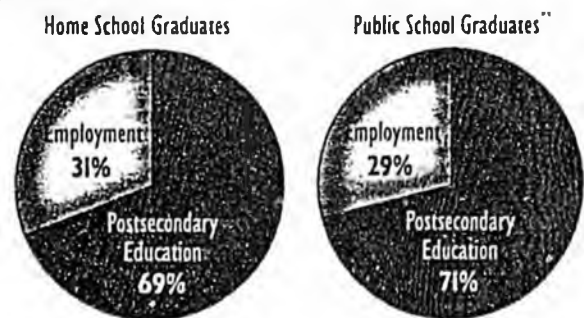
Figure 10.0 – Home Schoolers' Activities & Community Involvement



Footnote: * Participation in two or more of the 12 activities does not include "other activities." See Table B of Ray (1997).

What Happens After Graduation?

Figure 11.0*

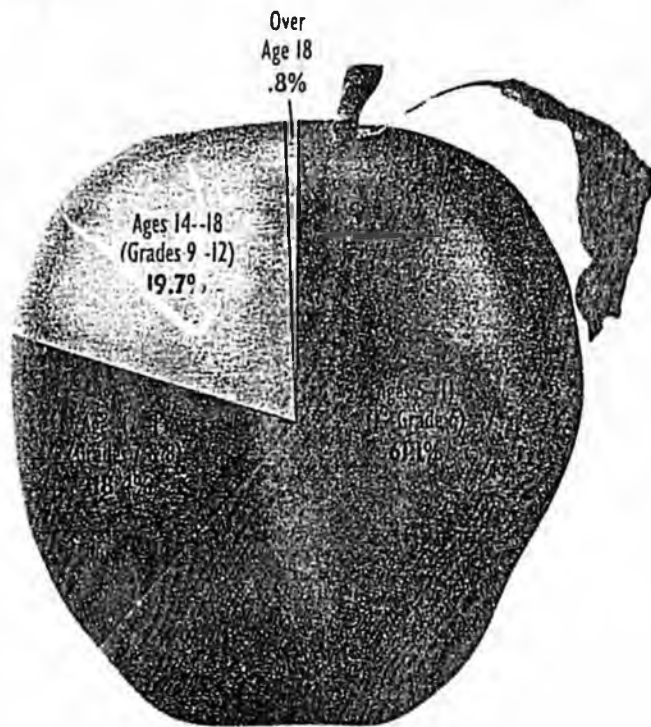


Footnote: *Percentages do not include military, unemployed, missions, ministry, volunteer work, etc., since these categories were not available for both groups.

**Based on table from National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) 1988-1994 Descriptive Summary Report.

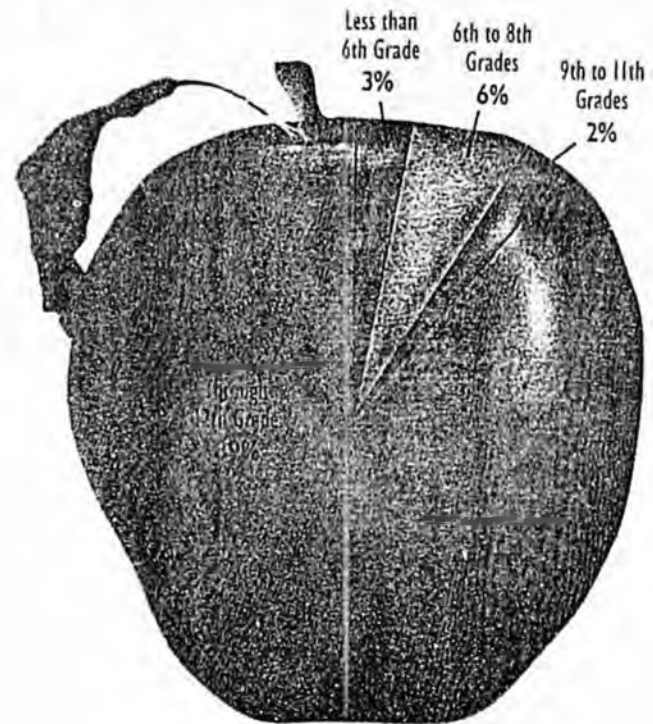
Ages of Home School Students in Study

Figure 13.0



How Long Are They Going To Home School?

Figure 14.0 – Parents' Intent to Continue Home Education



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

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

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

Luith Luith

Testimony concerning SB134 to be teleconferenced at 9:00 AM on Friday, April 11 before the Senate HESS committee:

I support SB134 because the state needs to recognize a successful educational alternative-home schooling our children. As home schoolers we believe in our God-given mandate to "train up" our children into good, responsible, critically-thinking adults. We favor a traditional approach in the best sense of the word, stressing academic subjects as listed in the bill. The 180-day requirement for public schools does not fit our routine which can be variable, from getting up to going to bed, at intervals throughout the day, alternating with chores. Some days are shorter, other days are spent away but still schooling. We gage when we are finished not be number of days but rather by when the subject matter has been completed. We are getting successful results locally and nationwide while public education continues to fail. Anyone wanting an honest assessment of education will acknowledge this or do the homework required to verify it.

— —

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

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

April 11, 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 well 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. SB 134, especially with the amendments contained in the committee substitute you have before you today, 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 simply 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.

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

Dear Senator Leman,

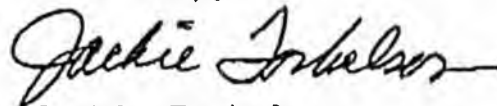
Thank you for introducing S.B. 134. As a long-time home schooler (10 years), I appreciate your work and that of others who recognize home schooling as a viable option in Alaska.

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 UAA 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

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,

Deborah A. Speckels
HC 60, Box 226
Copper Center, Alaska
99573

822-3464 phone & fax

Page 2 of 2

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

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

Subject: SB 134 Homeschooling Amendment

From: charlieh@Alaska.NET ("Charles, Jo, Luke, Shane, Rose") at CC2MHS1

Date: 4/10/97 7:03 PM

Dear Senators:

Please pass the amendment to SB 134 that would allow parents and legal guardians to educate their child at home. I have been homeschooling for eleven years.

Thank you for your support of the homeschoolers in our state.

Sincerely,

Barbara Njaa
Nikiski, AK

Subject: SB 134 amendments favorable to homeschoolers
From: charlieh@Alaska.NET ("Charles, Jo, Luke, Shane, Rose") at CC2MHS1
Date: 4/10/97 6:56 PM

Dear Senator Leman:

PLEASE VOTE TO APPROVE ANY AMENDMENTS TO SB 134 THAT ARE FAVORABLE TO HOMESCHOOLERS.

Thank you so much for the time and effort you have put into making homeschooling recognized in Alaska. I have been homeschooling my children for six years now.

Let's set an example to the rest of the nation by passing this bill which exhibits strong support of the homeschooling community.

I would like to see the bill amended to read "is being educated in the child's home by a parent or legal guardian.", as was recommended in correspondence I received via email from your office earlier today.

Thank you once again. Please keep me informed as to the status of this legislation.

Cordially yours

Joanne Hardesty
Nikiski, Alaska

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 G. Mese

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
Jennifer M. Caeton

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

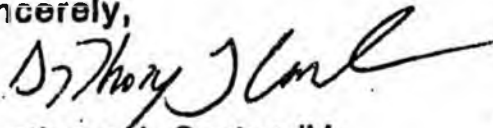
April 10, 1997

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

Sincerely,



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,

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

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.

April 10, 1997

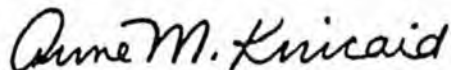
Senator Loren Leman
Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee
Fax No. 465-3810

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
19208 McCrary
Eagle River, AK 99577

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

Senator Gery Wilken,

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 thier efforts to give thier children the best education possible.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Caroline Smardo

Senator Gary Wilken.

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

Apr. 10 1997 08:32PM P1
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 SB134.

A Concerned Voter and Homeschooler,

Laura E. Mese

119 Naida

Kenai, AK 99611

(907) 283-2729