



EMPOWERING PARENTS

Igniting Communities

April 3, 2025

To: Illinois Legislative Black Caucus (ILBC) and Rep. Terra Costa-Howard

Statement of Opposition to HB 2827:

RE: The “Homeschool Act” and Its Overreach into Parental Rights

EPIC (Empowering Parents, Igniting Communities) is a coalition of home educators, parents, community leaders, clergy, and concerned citizens who stand in alignment with the **more than 48,000 witness slips filed in opposition to HB 2827**. We write to express our serious and unified concern regarding House Bill 2827, introduced by Rep. Terra Costa-Howard—referred to as the “**Homeschool Act**”—and its far-reaching implications for homeschooling families across Illinois. Though presented as a simple registration measure, HB 2827 opens the door to unwarranted government intrusion into the private decisions of families who have chosen home education.

We urge legislators to recognize this bill for what it truly is: a misguided attempt to regulate through fear rather than fact. The homeschool community is already governed by *People vs. Levisen* (1950), which requires education, accountability, and responsibility. What it does not need is a duplicative system that falsely implies that parents are guilty until proven innocent. For the sake of liberty, family integrity, and educational freedom, **we respectfully ask that HB 2827 be withdrawn or voted down in full.**

What HB 2827 Does:

- **Mandates homeschool registration** with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), a step toward future oversight and regulation (**Section 20, page 3**).
- **Ties homeschoolers to truancy laws**, which could lead to fines, investigations, and even jail time for parents (**Section 25, page 7**).
- **Subjects homeschool families to shifting public-school curriculum mandates**, including controversial content on Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) and LGBTQ+ history (**Page 8, line 20, Sections 26-1 and 27-1 of the School Code**)
- **Teacher Qualifications:** Parents who homeschool would need to have a high school diploma or equivalent qualification (**line 5 on page 24**).
- **State control over education** – Declares a child’s education serves “**public purposes of the state**”, stripping parents of their authority. This parallels laws that denied enslaved people autonomy over their lives, education, and labor, thereby treating children as **state property** (**page 23, lines 6-9**).



Inside This Packet:

1. **A Two-Column Legislative Overview**—A side-by-side comparison of Rep. Terra Costa Howard's statements vs. the facts, including our responses (rebuttals).
2. **A Concise Breakdown of HB 2827** – A brief analysis of the bill's dangers, potential consequences, and real-life statistics on Illinois education.
3. **A Call to Action for Legislators** – Steps to oppose HB 2827, prevent its passage, and support parental rights in home and private education.

Why This Matters

Illinois has a history of **passing legislation that erodes parental rights** (e.g., the repeal of the Parental Notice of Abortion Act). HB 2827 follows this trajectory by **criminalizing homeschooling families under the guise of accountability**. Meanwhile, **public schools are failing at record levels**, yet legislators choose to target successful homeschoolers instead.

We are asking you to **take a stand against HB 2827** by:

- **Publicly opposing the bill** and voicing concerns on behalf of families.
- **Speaking with fellow legislators and community leaders** to prevent this dangerous precedent.
- **Encouraging constituents to contact their representatives** and demand HB 2827 be **tabled and killed in the House**.

Homeschooling in Illinois has thrived for **75 years without government intervention**, producing **high-achieving, well-educated students**. We **must not allow unnecessary legislation to open the door for future government control**. Thank you for your time and leadership on this critical issue. Please review the enclosed materials. I look forward to discussing how we can work together to **protect parental rights and educational freedom in Illinois**.

Sincerely,

Ronald and Latasha H. Fields

Ronald and Latasha H. Fields

Home Educators with over 18 years of experience, Parental Rights Advocates, and founders of EPIC and Christian Home Educators Support System (CHESS), along with Our Report Ministries & Publications.

HB 2827: A Concise Legislative Overview & Responses

This chart provides a concise summary of key statements made by Rep. Terra Costa-Howard and the responses (rebuttals) from our Homeschool Coalition, emphasizing the bill's overreach, lack of data, and threat to parental rights in home education.

Rep. Terra Costa Howard's States	Homeschool Coalition Responses: (see 48,000+ witness slips filed)
Illinois does not require homeschool registration like 38 other states.	Illinois has protected homeschooling rights since <i>People v. Levisen (1950)</i> , allowing parents to offer an equivalent education. In contrast, Louisiana requires only simple annual registration. HB 2827 further links homeschoolers to truancy, fines, and penalties .
The bill ensures that homeschoolers teach core subjects.	Homeschoolers are already required to teach core subjects under People v. Levisen. HB 2827 ties homeschooling to the Illinois School Code , which now includes CSE and LGBTQ+ mandates . This is about government control, not academics.
There is no reliable data on homeschool performance.	NHERI studies show that homeschoolers score 15-25 percentile points higher than public school students on the ACT and SAT. ACT/SAT scores already exist . The state could request them from testing organizations rather than imposing unnecessary regulations .
HB 2827 does not impose new penalties—truancy laws already exist.	Illinois has a strong truancy system with legal definitions and enforcement by school districts and DCFS . With over 10% absenteeism statewide and 40% in CPS, why target homeschoolers when public school truancy is rampant? Why include penalties and criminality in this bill?
The Homeschool Declaration Form ensures children's well-being.	No verified data shows widespread homeschooling abuse. In rare cases, DCFS was involved but failed- these are system failures , not homeschooling issues. CPS reported over 1,000 severe abuse cases , and 36 former employees marked "Do Not Hire" were still hired for school sports. Public schools have a severe abuse crisis —why is the state focusing on homeschoolers instead of fixing its own broken system ?
In public/private schools, kids are in front of mandated reporters and those with background checks. In homeschooling, that doesn't occur.	This implies parents must be treated as potential criminals to educate their own children. Mandated reporters and background checks have not stopped abuse in CPS or her district of Dupage County . This bill won't prevent abuse—it's about control. Parents are not predators—they are protectors.
The bill is being amended to address concerns.	If lawmakers are scrambling to amend it, the bill was flawed from the start . We reject amendments. HB 2827 must be tabled and killed to protect parental rights.

For a detailed analysis of the rebuttals, please refer to the detailed breakdown document





A concise analysis of Rep. Terra Costa Howard's statements, accompanied by our rebuttals for each.

1) Illinois's Lack of Homeschool Regulations Compared to 38 States

Rep. Howard States: Illinois has no regulations for homeschooling, unlike 38 other states that require some form of oversight.

Rebuttal:

While it is true that Illinois does not have a homeschool registration requirement, it has a **voluntary registration**, which does not mean it lacks oversight. Illinois has long recognized the right of parents to educate their children at home under *People v. Levisen (1950)*, which established that homeschoolers must provide an **education equivalent to public schools** in core subjects. Moreover, the comparison to other states is misleading.

Take **Louisiana**, for example, where I am from and homeschooled for almost 6 years. **Louisiana has a simple, annual homeschool registration** requirement that **does not impose excessive oversight** or threaten families with penalties or make them criminals.

Notification Requirements in Louisiana: Louisiana provides two options for homeschooling:

Option 1: Home Study Program (State-Approved)

- Notification: You must apply for approval from the Louisiana Department of Education within 15 days of starting your homeschool program and renew annually by the anniversary date.
- Documentation: Requires submission of educational plans and progress (e.g., standardized test scores or a portfolio) when renewing.
- Approval: The state reviews and must approve your home study program each year.

Option 2: Nonpublic School (Not Seeking State Approval)

- Notification: You must register your homeschool as a nonpublic school not seeking state approval within 30 days of starting the school year using the online form through the Louisiana Department of Education.
- No approval is required—this option simply requires annual registration.
- Minimal oversight, no required testing or curriculum submission.

Important Notes: Option 2 (Nonpublic, not seeking approval) is the least intrusive and most commonly used option for independent homeschoolers in Louisiana. **HB 2827, however, goes far beyond a simple registration process**—it introduces **bureaucratic red tape, criminal penalties, and state intervention** that undermine parental rights.



2) Downplaying Penalties Like Jail Time and Fines

Rep. Howard States: The bill does not impose new penalties, only enforces existing truancy laws.

Rebuttal:

If the penalties already exist under current truancy law, **why does the bill explicitly reference them?** Why does it explicitly tie homeschool families to Illinois' truancy laws? HB 2827 requires families to file a "**Homeschool Declaration Form**," and failure to comply would trigger **criminal truancy charges** under **Sections 26-10 and 26-11 of the Illinois School Code**. These sections outline penalties that include:

- **Class C Misdemeanor**
- **Up to 30 days in jail and/or a \$500 fine**
- **Potential DCFS involvement and removal of children**

This is **not fear-mongering—it is exactly what the bill states**. If the intent were simply to file a form, there would be **no need** to tie compliance to truancy laws.

If Illinois already enforces truancy laws, then HB 2827 is unnecessary—unless the goal is increased state control over homeschooling.

Additionally, let's talk about truancy in **public schools**:

- **Over 10% of Illinois students are chronically absent**
- **40% of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students are chronically truant**

If the legislature is truly concerned about absenteeism, why is there no bill addressing the **massive truancy crisis in public schools**? Instead, lawmakers are targeting homeschooling, where there is **no documented truancy problem**.

3) Data and Homeschool Assessment Scores

Rep. Howard States: There is no data on homeschoolers, and this bill will help collect it.

Rebuttal:

The claim that there is "**no data**" on homeschool performance is **false**. The **National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI)** has conducted extensive studies showing that homeschooled students **consistently outperform public school students** on standardized tests like the ACT and SAT:

- **Homeschooled students score 15-25 percentile points higher** than public school students.
- **Black homeschool students score 23-42 percentile points higher** than Black public school students (*Ray, 2015*).
- **78% of peer-reviewed studies show that homeschooled students perform significantly better** than their public school peers (*Ray, 2017*).



Moreover, **ACT and SAT scores already provide a measure of homeschool performance.** Both organizations issue **official score reports** to colleges and educational institutions. However, **state education agencies do not always collect or track homeschool ACT/SAT data** unless they require it. This is a **state decision, not a lack of available data.** If Illinois wants more data, it could **request aggregated SAT/ACT homeschool scores from testing organizations** rather than **forcing unnecessary regulations onto families.**

4) Core Curriculum Requirements

Rep. Howard States: The bill only ensures that homeschoolers teach core subjects like math, science, and language arts.

Rebuttal:

Illinois **already requires** homeschoolers to teach core subjects under *People v. Levisen*.

This case **settled the matter in 1950**—homeschoolers are legally obligated to provide an education equivalent to public schools. However, HB 2827 **specifically references the Illinois School Code.** The homeschool program provides a course of instruction **sufficient to satisfy the education requirements** set forth in Sections 26-1 and 27-1 of the School Code, which has been updated as of 2021 to include:

- **Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE)**
- **LGBTQ+ History**
- **Other ideologically driven curriculum mandates**

This raises a serious concern, as the homeschool community is diverse and includes religious and sectarian families. **Will religious homeschool families be forced to comply with these mandates?** HB 2827 opens the door for the state to **violate** religious freedoms and **dictate what homeschoolers must teach.** If the intent of the bill were truly just to ensure core academic instruction, it would not need to reference the **Illinois School Code**, which is subject to constant change.

5) The Declaration Form "Ensures Children Are OK"

Rep. Howard States: The declaration form is just a way to know where homeschoolers are and ensure they are safe.

Rebuttal:

The Homeschool Declaration Form **does not ensure children's well-being**—it assumes **parental guilt without evidence.** There is **no verifiable data** proving widespread abuse in homeschooling. In fact, in the few tragic cases cited, **DCFS was already involved** and failed to protect the children. These were **not failures of homeschooling**, but failures of a **broken child welfare system.** Using **isolated incidents to justify regulating thousands** of loving, law-abiding families is both **disingenuous and dangerous.**



If Illinois lawmakers were truly concerned about student safety, they would **focus on the rampant sexual abuse crisis in public schools**. Consider these **shocking statistics from**

Chicago Public Schools (CPS):

- **Nearly 1,000 allegations of severe sexual abuse in CPS schools.**
- **446 cases in the 2024-2025 school year alone (Inspector General report).**
- **36 former CPS employees with "Do Not Hire" status due to student misconduct were still rehired.**

Meanwhile, **Illinois public schools are failing at historic levels:**

- **Only 37% of students are proficient in reading.**
- **Only 29% are proficient in math.**

Among Black students in Chicago Public Schools:

- **20% are proficient in reading.**
- **Only 9% are proficient in math.**
- **32 schools have 0% proficiency in reading or math.**

Yet, **teachers are never held accountable**—nearly all are rated "Excellent" or "Proficient," despite these results.

If lawmakers are truly concerned about student well-being, they should address **these public school failures first** instead of placing unnecessary burdens on homeschooling families.

6) Mandated Reporters Didn't Save CPS or Dupage County Students—Why Target Homeschool Parents?

Rep. Terra Costa Howard States: In public or private schools, children are in front of mandated reporters and adults with background checks. In homeschooling, that doesn't occur.

Rebuttal:

This assumes that parents—by default—should be **treated as suspects**. The few tragic cases cited were already under the watch of DCFS, which failed to act. These are **not homeschooling failures but child welfare system failures**.

Mandated reporters and background checks didn't prevent over **1,000 allegations of sexual abuse in Chicago Public Schools alone**. Two teachers in DuPage County were charged with sexual abuse. If background checks and mandated reporters failed there, how does this bill suddenly become a safeguard? **Parents are not predators—they are protectors**. This bill is not about preventing abuse; it's about control.



7) The Bill is Being Amended, Not Withdrawn

Rep. Howard States: They are working on amendments to address concerns.

Rebuttal:

Homeschool families **don't want amendments—we want the bill tabled and killed.**

The mere fact that amendments are needed proves how **deeply flawed** HB 2827 is. The bill was **not drafted with input from the homeschool community in Illinois**; it was taken from a group of disgruntled homeschoolers called the **Coalition of Responsible Home Education (CRHE)** in the state of Massachusetts, yet now we are expected to negotiate on a bill that fundamentally threatens our parental rights in the state of Illinois. **This is not a bill to be amended—it is a bill that needs to be stopped.**

We reject the premise that **homeschool families need state intervention** to function properly and to give our children a **safe** and quality education. Illinois has long been a leader in **homeschooling and private schools' educational freedom**. We must ensure that continues. **HB 2827 must be stopped, not amended.**

HB 2827 is About Government Overreach, Not Education

This bill is not about protecting children—it's about **expanding government control over homeschooling and private school families**. The **penalties and criminality** are real. The references to the **Illinois School Code are intentional**. And the lack of state-collected data **does not justify** forcing homeschoolers into a **regulatory framework** that could lead to mandatory assessments and curriculum oversight.

Illinois is **not an "outlier" for protecting parental rights**—it is a **national leader** in educational freedom for homeschoolers and private schools. We must ensure it stays that way.

HB 2827 must be stopped.

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Constitutional & Parental Rights Brief: Opposition to HB 2827

Parental Rights Are Constitutionally Protected

Parents have a **fundamental right**—armed by state and federal courts—to direct the education, care, and upbringing of their children without unnecessary government interference.

Foundational Legal Precedents

Pierce v. Society of Sisters (1925) The U.S. Supreme Court held that:

“The child is not the mere creature of the State.” Parents have the right to choose private or religious schooling over public schools.”

Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972) The Court ruled in favor of Amish parents' rights to remove their children from public schools based on religious convictions, alarming:

“The State’s interest in universal education is not absolute to the exclusion of parental rights.”

Troxel v. Granville (2000)

Reinforced that parents possess a **constitutionally protected liberty interest** in the care, custody, and control of their children.

Illinois Constitution – Article X, Section 1

Illinois arms parents’ rights to choose the kind of education their children receive.

“The State shall provide for an efficient system of high quality public educational institutions and services... Education in their institutions, public and private, shall be free from discrimination...”