



## **KEEP YOUR MONEY, PLEASE!**

### **Why Homeschoolers Oppose State Funding of Home Education**

(Senate Bill 1255: *Empowering Parents Grant Program*)

Attachment 2

Idaho homeschooling families are passionate about their liberties. Home education currently enjoys a stellar reputation, but this was not always the case.

In 1984, three Idaho couples were sentenced to six months in jail. Their children were placed in foster care because they chose to educate their children at home. For nearly three decades, Idaho homeschooling families have fought in court and in this legislature to secure the tremendous freedom from government oversight that we currently enjoy. ***Along the way, we have always opposed anything that might jeopardize those liberties, especially state funding.***

Homeschool Idaho's approximately 3,000 affiliated families stand in opposition to state funding.

Government funding of anything inexorably leads to state regulation and control. Indeed, legislators should instinctively be wary of any group that demands both state funding and freedom from state monitoring of the use of those funds. Promises of strings-free state funding should never be made.

**The issue is funding, not choice. We already have educational choice. This bill will expand state funding. That will, in turn, lead to greater state control, even over our private education options.**

In the face of homeschoolers' longstanding opposition to state funding: Why should we who have led the battle for parental control of our children's education be asked to violate our conscience on this issue? Why not support our opposition to state funding, rather than unlocking the door to the government oversight of our community.

Homeschool Idaho is not asking that this bill be defeated. We only ask that it be amended to exclude homeschoolers.

***The Simple Solution:*** Change the definition of "eligible student" at lines 14 and 15 on page 2 of the bill to only include "public or private school students."

---

14 (4) "Eligible student" means a person in kindergarten through grade 12, whether  
15 a public school or nonpublic ***or private*** school student.

---

**Homeschool Idaho, 101 Eagle Glen Lane, Eagle, ID 83616**

## **Did 5,000 Homeschoolers Really Apply for the Governor's Grant Funds in 2020?**

Some have erroneously claimed that 5,000 homeschoolers applied to receive grants from the program set up by Governor Little when the COVID shutdown occurred.

The confusion arises from the Governor's original grant application process which occurred while public school students were receiving their education online from home due to COVID shutdowns. Many parents mistakenly assumed they were homeschooling because their children were receiving instruction from home. It was common to hear people say, "We're all homeschooling now." Because the grant did not define the term, we believe that many of those 5,000 applicants were actually still fully-enrolled in a public or virtual public school or program when they checked the homeschool box on the application.

In reality, true homeschooler applications for the Governor's grant were almost nonexistent. So, it is misleading to leave the impression that those 5,000 applicants were genuine homeschooling parents who were happy to receive state funding.

## **Do All Homeschoolers Oppose State Funding?**

Like any group, there are a variety of opinions within Homeschool Idaho families. But the significant majority of our 3,000 affiliated families oppose state funding.

It is also worth noting that the "homeschoolers" who support state funding disproportionately come from a couple of different quarters: First are families that began homeschooling in states that have both some degree of funding for, and a high level of regulation of, homeschooling. They are used to intrusive government regulations even though they now live in Idaho. Second are families who erroneously believe they are homeschooling even though their children are enrolled in a virtual charter school or a public school distance learning program.

## **How Participating Families Jeopardize Those Who Don't:**

Idaho's homeschool community struggled for decades to attain our current level of freedoms. Consequently, anything that might directly, or even indirectly, result in renewed government intervention must be opposed at all costs.

Since it is a given that acceptance of state funding will require monitoring of those funds as they are being spent by the recipient, the first step toward government oversight of home education will have quietly taken place. If financial irregularities are discovered, as has occurred in other states, further and deeper monitoring, and even auditing, of those fund expenditures may leave an unfortunate impression of homeschoolers in general.

And understandably, not every legislator is always clear in distinguishing private homeschoolers from the various online public school programs in which students may enroll. So, the risk of spillover of government oversight grows at each turn.

In the face of all this, to simply shrug and suggest that some members of the community could relinquish their freedoms in exchange for state funding without weakening the edifice that protects the entire community is far from comforting.