

29 May 2023

To the Editor: brandon@salmonpress.com; *Record Enterprise*, Salmon Press

Re: *Private and Religious Home schooling with Public State Funds?*

Dear Editor,

As lifelong educators in state-supported public higher education, we found it very shocking that State Representative, District 18, John Sellers would take the position to “Get your Kids out of Public Education.” Such an extreme position is irresponsible for a newly elected representative where the overwhelming majority of the children of his constituents attend public school. A true representative would reflect the majority who rely on civic education and not private schools disguising the goal of Christian-based education reflecting for some “Parental Rights.” It is a tribute to the totality of Representatives that SB272 did not pass, upholding the principle that religious education is not to be funded by the state. This has been the history of our democratic secular nation that, in fact, Private Schools are just that, private, and not funded by public taxes. The First Amendment is understood by lawyers and laypersons to contain a “non-establishment” clause interpreted historically as religion being **separated** from the state. Private schools devoted to religious education should not be disguised under the rubric of “Parental Rights,” when in practice they serve to undermine the majority civil goal of public education. It is, thus, fitting that this bill was not passed, and it is a tribute the wisdom of the General Court and thus the People, as in “We the People”. Public education, with its long-established secular base, lies at the foundation of our democracy and civil society. Public education is to be funded by the Public Treasury; Private education is not. It is unfortunate that this principle has already been compromised by the “Education Freedom Account” in which each home-schooled child is entitled to receive \$4,800 per child. Imagine how these funds might be used to enrich and better serve the children in NH’s public schools. It is tragic and ironic that those who favor close scrutiny of public tax funds could even think that siphoning them of for private education, with a questionable curriculum, might be a good idea. This is not to mention and satisfy what qualifications and certification might exist for “teachers” in this unique private education for the areas of science, history, global studies, computer science, civics, technology, and literature?

We, unelected candidates from District 18 and District 7 express our collective gratitude to the thousands of voters who supported our respective candidacies for State Representative and Senator-- including both local and state-wide supporters. We want to let them know that we will build upon what we have learned and gained personally from our respective candidacies, especially from the valuable conversations we have had with the citizens of the region and state.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, PhD, 2022 Candidate for NH House District 18

Richard A. Lobban, PhD, 2022 Candidate for NH Senate District 7