



But we must never forget the HARD road to homeschool freedom in Nevada!

Here it is, 2017 and I'm sitting in a meeting of the Nevada Assembly Education Committee listening to the introduction of [AB 186](#), a bill to lower the compulsory school attendance age from 7 to 5, mandate Kindergarten for ALL Nevada children, and force all NV Public Schools to offer PreKindergarten. As NV homeschool parents showed up and [testified against the bill](#) because of the threat to their right to decide "when" their child is ready for school it became increasingly clear that current Legislators on both sides of the aisle have NO IDEA what is currently in NV law regarding homeschooling and the justification behind the current freedom of NV Homeschooling.

I began to wonder, perhaps even homeschool parents today really don't know the history of our homeschool law. So, in response to a Legislator's question of how homeschooling in Nevada got to where it is today I wrote this SHORT timeline to explain how burdensome homeschool regulations were back in the day and how parents across the state worked together over 25 years to give parents the FREEDOM they enjoy to direct the education of their children without government controls!

So, here goes...

1947, amended in 1956 – first “homeschool law” in the nation passed in Nevada. This law basically said that parents could educate their children at home if they provided "satisfactory written evidence of equivalent instruction to the public schools as approved by the NV State Board of Education.”

- 4/3/17 - Correction: the actual date of the first homeschool law in the nation was 1947 in Nevada, it was amended in 1956; see page 11 of [Homeschooling; The Original Option](#). It took **60 years** for homeschool parents to gain independence from the public school system. Many thanks to Frank Schnorbus, our NV homeschool history expert for pointing out the correct year.

1982 – Two mothers “applied” to the school district in Winnemucca, NV to homeschool their children. One mother was approved because she was a Nevada certified teacher, the other mother was denied because she was not a certified teacher and the family lived within 50 miles of a local public school. That mother filed a lawsuit and lost. The reason? The district court judge ruled because the State Board of Education had never written regulations for the law in

existence at the time there was no basis on which to rule in her favor. That judge also stated in his ruling that he objected to the concept of homeschooling and he “recommended” several requirements if it were to be allowed.

1983 – Parents went to the NV State Legislature requesting a change to the law allowing parents to homeschool their children without government approval. However, the Department of Education testified that they were writing regulations based on the judge’s ruling for approval by the State Board of Education. The Legislature refused to move the bill forward to allow the SBOE time to “regulate” homeschooling via the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). The SBOE not only approved regulations following the judge’s recommendations, they added many additional conditions which turned Nevada into one of the most “over-regulated” homeschool states in the nation.

The SBOE continued to ADD to the regulations over the next 5 years. By 1990 regulations included, in part, annual education plans and “approval” of the homeschool by the local school board, birth certificates and photos of the child had to be submitted, first-time homeschoolers had to work under the oversight of a NV certified teacher, children had to be tested annually AT the local public school (not in their home where they were taught), days and minutes of teaching time equal to the public school were required, the list went on and on. But at least parents were “allowed” to homeschool.

1988-1996 – Nevada homeschool parents throughout the state began to work together to oppose the more onerous regulations. In 1991, the Superintendent of Public Instruction said during a State Board of Education meeting I attended, “You parents might be allowed to homeschool but we WILL control you!” The board, at that same meeting, established the “Northern and Southern Home School Advisory Councils to the SBOE” and attempted to use the confines of these advisory committees to control our attempts to modify regulations. But we kept up the fight and we SLOWLY got the regulations reduced, one at a time, and by 1996 we met our ultimate goal of eliminating the annual testing requirement as discrimination against homeschooled children and not required by law.

1997-2002 – Nevada homeschool parents had regulations we could “live with.” However, the regulations were still “more restrictive” than allowed in law simply because the State Board of Education believed they were allowed to “regulate” as they saw fit no matter what the law actually said.

2002 – The first step towards autonomy from government control begins. The Advisory Committees were invited by the newly elected State Board of Education President to offer the “least restrictive” regulations possible under existing law to the SBOE and those would be passed. That task took two more years but by 2004 the regulations were as minimal as they could be under the existing statute.

2007 – A bill is introduced in the NV State Legislature, The Homeschool Freedom Bill. State Senator Maurice Washington (R) sponsored [SB 404](#), to “codify” existing regulations. Former Assemblywoman Sharron Angle had requested a Bill Draft Request (BDR) for homeschooling in 2006 before she left office and Senator Washington agreed to be the sponsor

of the bill in 2007. Frank Schnorbus and I co-authored the bill which came out of the LCB exactly as we wrote it, a major accomplishment in and of itself, and a testament to the YEARS of experience we had in rewriting regulations and getting those approved. NHN spearheaded the lobbying efforts to get the bill passed. The Superintendent of Public Instruction at the time, Dr. Keith Rheault, was supportive of the bill. In addition, then Assemblyman Mo Denis (D) was very helpful in ushering the bill through the NV Assembly. **SB 404 unanimously passed both the NV Senate and Assembly and was signed into law by Governor Jim Gibbons on June 14, 2007.**

During the Legislative bill process, NHN produced [Answers to Good Questions](#) to explain to Legislators why we had requested SB 404. Basically, the new law moved “homeschooling” out from under the oversight of NV State Board of Education and gave parents the right to direct the education of their child based on the age and skill level of the child as determined by the parent. By signing the [Notification of Intent to Homeschool](#) parents take FULL RESPONSIBILITY (including financial) to provide education of their child. Education neglect laws do apply to protect the interests of the child. However, to date there has never been an accusation of education neglect against a parent in Nevada who has filed an NOI to Homeschool.

2017 – Nevada homeschool parents have worked hard to not only educate their children well but to defend their right to do so. There have been many parent groups over the last 35 years working towards this goal. [NHN was founded in 2002](#) as a “statewide organization” by parents living in both the north and the south to work together to protect the fundamental right of parents to direct the education of their children via homeschooling. Elissa Wahl and Frank Schnorbus were two of the original founding members of NHN who dedicated the next 15 years to the success of the organization. Over the last 30 years Nevada parents have worked hand in hand with [HSLDA](#) to advocate for parents who are doing a GOOD job educating their own children, without "help" or oversight from the government.

There are SO many details I could add... as well as the names of ALL the parents who participated in the process over the years. But the list is long and I may forget someone! If you were one of those parents we want to say THANK YOU for all you did to ensure that future generations would not suffer the intolerable regulations of days gone by. And to all you parents just starting on your homeschool journey, WELCOME... you will succeed because you care!

~Barbara Dragon
NHN Officer Emerita (active)