



www.nevadahomeschoolnetwork.com

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February 24, 2013

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair Senate Education Committee
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson, Chair Assembly Education Committee
Nevada State Legislative Senate and Assembly Education Committee Members

Dear Senator Woodhouse, Assemblyman Anderson, Committee Members,

By way of introduction, Nevada Homeschool Network (NHN) advocates for Nevada families who have chosen to direct the education of their children. In this capacity, we are writing today to oppose SB 182 as introduced.

Among other things, SB 182 will lower the compulsory attendance age for entry into school from 7 to 5 years of age. This requirement will apply to all children, whether their parents planned to send them to public school or private school or homeschool.

We have several concerns with SB 182 as introduced:

- While we believe that requiring school districts to provide all-day Kindergarten in every elementary school is not in the best interests of Nevada children and will create a financial burden for Nevada's school districts it is not our intention to comment on that portion of the bill.
- According to the Home School Legal Defense Association, there are no long-term replicable studies proving that mandating attendance at age 5 rather than 7 is better for the educational development of the child. To the contrary, there is much more research indicating that early childhood education does not improve the child's potential for being a better student in the future, because early gains disappear in a few years. This is especially significant for boys, because their cognitive and verbal skill development generally lags behind that of girls at this age.
- Thus, Nevada parents should continue to have the right decide when a child is ready to attend school. The current age of 7 gives parents that opportunity. Parents who desire to enroll their child at age 5 in Nevada can choose to do so already. To force children to start school before the age of 7 interferes with the parent's fundamental right to direct the education of their children and to make wise choices regarding the readiness of their children for formal instruction.
- Further, lowering the compulsory attendance age from 7 to 5 will create an undue financial burden on parents who intend to enroll their child in private school but wish to wait until their child turns 7. And parents choosing to homeschool would now be required to submit a Notification of Intent to Homeschool at age 5 even if they have determined their child is not ready to begin formal instruction again, placing an undue burden on the family.

Article II, Section 2 of the Nevada Constitution states, "...the legislature may pass such laws as will tend to secure a general attendance of the children in each school district upon said public schools." The key here is "**tend to secure a general attendance**" which is met under current law. Therefore, NHN requests that SB 182 be amended to leave the compulsory attendance age at 7-18. Parents should continue to have the authority to decide what is best for their children.

Respectfully,

Frank Schnorbus, Chair

Elissa Wahl, Vice-Chair