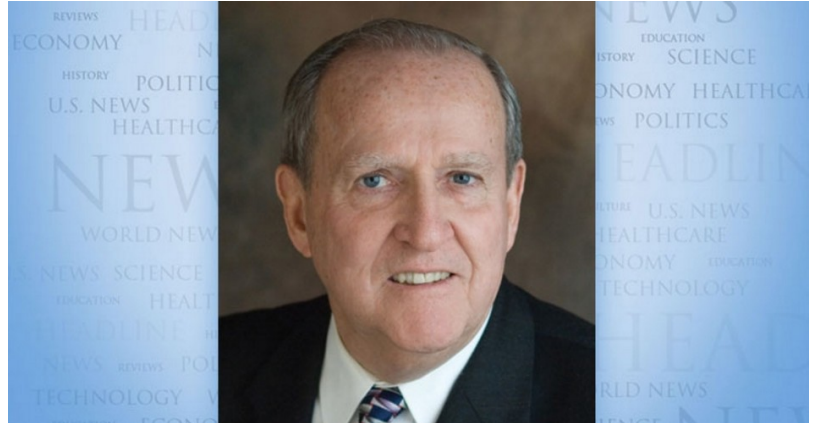




Home Schooling: A Parental Right

If you defend the choice of home schooling for youngsters, you will likely hear an opponent of the spreading practice insist that those who don't send their children to an officially recognized (by government) school are creating social misfits, not well-educated citizens. In other words, if you believe in home schooling, you are depriving youngsters of a) the chance to be introduced to sex education at early elementary levels, 2) exposure to drugs at junior and senior high schools from other students, 3) near total avoidance of factual information about our own nation's commendable history or even condemnations of what is commendable, and 4) more. This is today's reality, and increasingly rare are government schools free of such calamities.



In addition, the government "public" schools are forbidden to teach about the existence of God and the afterlife, or provide instruction about the Ten Commandments. There will be emphasis on the need for tolerance about a variety of views — including all portions of the LGBTQ agenda — that no primary or high schooler would have been exposed to a mere 50 years ago.

Home schooling poses a threat to the already far advanced remaking of America. As has often been said, "America became great, not because of what government did, but because of what government was prevented from doing by adherence to the restraints in the federal and state constitutions." Yet we regularly hear that governments had to enter the field of education because of a need to teach more youngsters and get them away from the grasp of religion that many home-schooling parents want their children to adopt. There is, of course, no mention in the U.S. Constitution of government having any role in the field of education.

There's an even more basic issue kept from consideration by the ruling establishment and their many opponents of home schooling. Simply stated, to whom do children belong? Does government own them, or are parents and/or legal guardians in charge? Sadly, there are some who believe parents have no rights whatsoever when it comes to education.

Elizabeth Bartholet is the faculty director of the Child Advocacy Program at Harvard University, a program she started in 2004. A graduate of Radcliffe (officially a part of Harvard University), she earned a law degree from Harvard and has spent many years in the fields of civil rights and family law. Now a leader of those who believe home schooling is wrong and should be declared illegal, she states that it is an example of "near-absolute parental power," something that is "inconsistent with a proper understanding of the human rights of children." Is it not a right of children to be introduced to their Creator? Shouldn't they be shielded from what is so common in government education today? Yet, according to Bartholet, parents should be considered only as deliverers of their offspring to the



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government.

This Harvard-trained lawyer bases her call for abolishing home schooling on the children’s “right to be protected from potential child abuse.” Are not children being abused by what goes on in the government schools? She wants parents who wish to educate their youngsters away from the very real deficiencies and dangers of government education to be pre-approved by the state-certified instructors. Parents who might be allowed to teach their young must use a specified curriculum, provide some government agency with annual reports of their efforts, have the children pass a state-created test of their progress, and even allow government officials to inspect their home. All of this adds up to repeating the regimen of tyrants throughout history — pre-Christian Sparta and the post-Christian Hitler Youth Movement come immediately to mind.

Happily, teaching youngsters at home has spread across our country. It would have spread farther and more quickly but for the need of many families to have two wage earners. Yes, there are, sad to note, rare cases where home-schooled children are victimized by an abusive parent. But outlawing home schooling would be a foolhardy and counter-productive step that unsurprisingly has been recommended at Harvard University. Home-schooled youngsters have regularly excelled in open competitions about spelling, geography, and more. The practice shouldn’t be banned; it should be celebrated and encouraged.

John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#).



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