



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on May 2, 2018

Homeschoolers Turn Out in Droves to Defeat Intrusive California Bill

Don't mess with homeschoolers: That's the lesson California lawmakers, like their counterparts in [Hawaii](#), learned last week when hundreds of homeschoolers and their allies descended upon Sacramento in opposition to intrusive legislation — and won.

At issue was a [bill](#) sponsored by Assemblyman Jose Medina, a Democrat, that “would have categorized the type of school on a form filed by private educators. One of the categories was homeschools. The state considers homeschools as private schools when it comes to state regulation,” reported [GVWire](#).



According to [The Desert Review](#), Medina's bill originally would have required local fire marshals to inspect the abodes of homeschooling families, a provision that was deleted in part because “firefighters objected to this sweeping new job requirement.” Then the bill was amended to “mandate state disclosure of the names and addresses of homeschool families.” Opposition continued to mount, and just before last Wednesday's education committee hearing on the bill, Medina removed that provision, though he “insisted that the state needed to gather more data on homeschoolers.”

Homeschoolers prefer their privacy, however, so they trekked to Sacramento to inform their elected representatives. According to [GVWire](#), “lines to speak wrapped around two floors of the Capitol and out the door.” *The Desert Review* noted that the bill's “opponents included a number of professionals, state-credentialed teachers, and self-described progressives and liberal Democrats.” Over the course of three hours, nearly 1,000 people told the committee in no uncertain terms to kill the bill. Only two people spoke in favor of it.

Medina claims he was motivated to introduce the legislation by the case of David and Louise Turpin, constituents of his who are accused of holding their 13 children captive and torturing them, claiming they were homeschooling the children. “When the Turpin case happened,” he said, “I, like many others in my district ... looked in the law, looked for what may have been able to be done to avoid that incident.”

But as Assemblyman Kevin Kiley, a Republican member of the education committee, pointed out, the Turpin case was “an extreme outlier” and not the sort of incident on which policy should be based. He also asked Medina what problem in the homeschool community his bill would solve, forcing Medina to admit not only that his bill was “not an attempt to solve a problem with homeschooling” but also that, when it comes right down to it, he “do[es] not see a problem with the homeschool community at all.”

Republican Assemblyman Travis Allen, who is running for governor, declared in the hearing that the bill “is absolutely wrong. It must fail. It must fail today.”



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At the end of the debate, “Medina made a last-ditch plea for the bill by invoking James Madison,” reported *The Desert Review*. “The irony was not lost on listeners aware of the fact that homeschooling was the norm during the founding era.”

When it came time to vote on the bill, not enough committee members could be found for a quorum. Committee chairman Patrick O’Donnell, a Democrat, tried again “more than six hours later,” wrote GVWire, but he couldn’t get a motion to vote on the bill, at which point the bill was withdrawn.

It was the second victory for California homeschoolers Wednesday. Earlier, Democratic Assemblywoman Susan Eggman pulled from that day’s debate — but not permanently — her bill to create an “advisory committee” on homeschooling. That bill had previously contained language to mandate “home inspections, curriculum standards and certification for parent teachers,” penned GVWire.

Homeschoolers and their supporters were ecstatic over the defeat of Medina’s legislation. “It is dead! You did it! We did it!!!!” exclaimed Stefanie Duncan Foster on the Parents United 4 Kids Facebook group.

Kiley [tweeted](#) that the bill’s demise was a “major victory for all the homeschool educators, parents, and students who came to the Capitol and made their voice heard.”

“This is a victory worth celebrating,” said Brad Dacus, president of the Pacific Justice Institute, a conservative legal-defense organization that opposed the bill. “All is not lost in California; when we stand together, we can still make a difference.”

Indeed, as homeschoolers are increasingly proving, they are a force with which to be reckoned.

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