



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on September 30, 2021

U.S. Homeschooling Jumped 300 Percent During COVID

In "[Homeschooling in Uncertain Times](#)," just published by the Pioneer Institute, authors William Donovan and William Heuer celebrate one unmistakable benefit from the COVID-related shutdown: Not only has the number of homeschooled children tripled, but most parents are deciding to keep their children in a homeschool environment even after the virus has dissipated.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of households with children being homeschooled has doubled in one year, from 5.4 percent during the 2019-20 school year to 11 percent in 2020-21. Among black families, it increased nearly five-fold, from 3.3 percent to 16.1 percent in just one year. In the past two years, homeschooling in the United States has more than tripled.



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Said co-author Donovan, "For a lot of people who had been thinking about homeschooling, the pandemic made it a good time to make the change." The authors added, "Traditional homeschooling was rapidly growing before the pandemic, and is likely to stick."

The growth in homeschooling in black families was especially notable:

We point out the rise in homeschooling among Black and other minority families. While they too were influenced by health concerns, often they chose to homeschool because they believe their homes are a safer environment than the halls and grounds of public schools, especially in urban areas.

This no doubt is upsetting to liberal academics such as Harvard Law professor Elizabeth Bartholet. She claims that homeschooling is "a threat to children and society." She co-authored "Parents' Religion and Children's Welfare: Debunking the Doctrine of Parents' Rights" with James Dwyer. Dwyer, a law professor at the College of William and Mary, claimed that the fundamental civic relationship is not that between parents and their children but instead is between the individual and the state.

Bartholet is infamous for authoring "Homeschooling: Parent Rights Vs. Child Rights to Education & Protection" that appeared in the Arizona Law Review in 2020. She claims that

The rapidly growing homeschooling phenomenon [poses a] threat to children and society....

Many homeschool precisely because they want to isolate their children from ideas and values central to public education and our democracy.

Many promote racial segregation and female subservience.

Many question science.



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Many are determined to keep their children from exposure to views that might enable autonomous choice about their future lives.

She then goes on to demand “a rethinking of child rights ... and recommends a presumptive ban on homeschooling, with the burden on parents to demonstrate justification for permission to homeschool.” Bartholet’s real target is Christians homeschooling their children. From her *Arizona Law Review* article:

A very large proportion of homeschooling parents are ideologically committed to isolating their children from the majority culture and indoctrinating them in views and values that are in serious conflict with that culture....

Many don’t believe in the scientific method, looking to the Bible instead as their source for understanding the world.

The state owns the children, according to Bartholet:

The legal claim made in defense of the current homeschooling regime is based on a dangerous idea about parent rights — that those with enormous physical and other power over infants and children should be subject to virtually no check on that power.

That parents should have monopoly control over children’s lives, development, and experience.

That parents who are committed to beliefs and values counter to those of the larger society are entitled to bring their children up in isolation, so as to help ensure that they will replicate the parents’ views and lifestyle choices....

The legal claim is also inconsistent with an idea that has been central since the beginning of compulsory education — that the state has a powerful interest in educating children in ways that enable positive participation in the larger society.

In an interview with the *Harvard Gazette* Bartholet expanded her attack on Christians educating their children at home:

Many homeschooling parents are extreme ideologues, committed to raising their children within their belief systems isolated from any societal influence....

The danger is both to these children and to society. The children may not have the chance to choose for themselves whether to exit these ideological communities; society may not have the chance to teach them values important to the larger community, such as tolerance of other people’s views and values.

Does Bartholet not see the irony in that last statement, about “tolerance of other people’s views and values”? Without realizing it, she makes a compelling case for homeschooling that reaches far beyond concerns over health and safety. Homeschooling may teach children that they are sovereign citizens, that God has given them certain unalienable rights, that the Constitution guarantees those rights, and that governments are instituted among men to protect those rights.



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All of this is counter to the “culture” that Bartholet and other statist support and defend. It’s no wonder that those in the freedom fight celebrate the small bit of good news that government’s heavy-handed COVID response is bringing: Homeschooling is on the rise and its increase is likely to continue.



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