

# HOME SCHOOL<sup>®</sup> LEGAL DEFENSE ASSOCIATION

*Advocates for Family & Freedom*

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April 12, 2004

Office of the Governor  
Governor Mark R. Warner  
State Capitol, 3rd Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Re: House Bill 675

Dear Governor Warner:

We are writing to encourage you to sign House Bill 675, which would eliminate the baccalaureate requirement for homeschool parents. There is a suspicion among some that a parent with just a high school diploma cannot teach as well as a parent with a college degree. The statistics prove otherwise. Additionally, the other 49 states in the U.S. have realized this and allow parents with high school diplomas or less to teach without additional requirements or controls.

By way of introduction, the Home School Legal Defense Association is a public advocacy group dedicated to protecting the rights of parents to be free from unnecessary government regulations. We presently have over 80,000 member homeschool families throughout the 50 states, with over 4,000 member families in the state of Virginia.

- First, Homeschool Children whose Parents have a High School Diploma Score 19-35 Percentile Points Higher than Average.

**Children of homeschool parents with a high school diploma score, on the average, 19-35 percentile points higher than the average.**

**Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute and others have found that only 35% of teaching mothers have a college degree or higher and yet their**

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**children score no higher on standardized achievement tests than those being taught by mothers without a college degree.**

In one study by Lawrence Rudner of 16,000 homeschoolers, the test scores of homeschooled students with both parents having only high-school diplomas are on average 19 to 35 percentile points higher than the average scores of public school students with teachers having baccalaureate degrees and certification.

These two major national studies still put home-educated students, taught by high school diploma parents, in the top third of all students!

- **Secondly, 49 States Have Abandoned the College Degree Requirements.**

This bill will bring Virginia up to speed with 49 other states that allow homeschoolers to only have a high school diploma or less to teach their children.

The trend across the United States is not to apply any teacher qualifications standards to homeschoolers. The emphasis seems to be focusing on student performance through an annual test or portfolio evaluation rather than teacher performance.

In fact, the legislatures or courts in 49 states have completely abandoned requirements for teacher certification and college degrees.

Currently, forty states do not require homeschool parents to have ANY specific qualifications. Homeschoolers in these states can homeschool without proof of any particular educational qualifications.

In fact, of the nine states that do have qualification requirements, eight of them require only a GED OR high school diploma. The eight states which require only a high school diploma or a GED are: GA, NC, NM, OH, PA, SC, TN, and WV. (Only North Dakota requires a college degree or the passage of a “teacher’s test.”)

- **Thirdly, the Law Needs to Focus on Results, and not Qualifications.**

Under the Home-School Statute, parents must have their children tested and submit the results to their local superintendent by August 1 every year. If the scores fall below the fourth stanine or 23rd percentile, the child’s education program is put on probation for one year. If after one year the student’s scores have not improved, the parents must make other arrangements for their child’s education.

Even if you eliminate the baccalaureate degree requirement, homeschool students will still be regulated based on their performance on standardized tests.

- **Fourth, this Bill Ends Discrimination Against Parents with Only a High School Diploma.**

It is very important to end this discrimination because of all the families in counties around Virginia who are harassed and sometimes deterred from homeschooling because of the cumbersome process that families with only a high school diploma have to go through at this time. This bill will end this discrimination and allow parents with high school diplomas to freely teach their children like homeschoolers in the 49 other states. Of course, their progress will be tracked carefully through the testing and evaluation process that is currently in the law.

Therefore, given this evidence, we would ask that you end the discrimination against parents with high school diplomas and sign House Bill 675.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Chris J. Klicka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C".

Christopher J. Klicka  
Senior Counsel