

Our MiCHN family and friends,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.”-2 Corinthians 1:3-7

We want to thank you for your patience as we have begun to sort through and come to understand the full extent of everything going on in Lansing right now. With the latest developments and statements from certain elected officials, we know there are many unanswered questions, concerns, fears, and doubts that you all have. It is our hope and prayer that this letter and all the information within will help guide you and bring some momentary peace to a very volatile situation.

Many of you may even be largely unaware of what has been happening. On December 2, 2023, the Washington Post published a story highlighting the abuse and death of a child whose family claimed to “homeschool.” MiCHN’s own Vice-President, Israel Wayne was highlighted and quoted in that article, in defense of you, our homeschooling families. Since the release of that article, Michigan’s Attorney General Dana Nessel has called for “monitoring mechanisms” to be used in order to “protect children.” Along with the Attorney General, Representative Matt Koleszar (D-22nd District) has also called for the registration and regulation of home educators state-wide.

First, we must stress with you that as of the writing of this letter, **no bill has formally been introduced to either chamber of our legislature.** With that said, Representative Koleszar has stated that the legislature is “likely to see a bill” when they reconvene next month in the beginning of January. With that said, MiCHN does not expect a vote to take place on ANY bill introduced to the legislature until the two vacant seats left by Representative Coleman and Representative Stone are filled after the special elections on April 16, 2024. This means we, as a community, have a lot of work ahead of us.

So what CAN we do?

- 1.) **PRAY!** We are in a situation that is going to require God to move and lead. If you are not accustomed to spending time in prayer, we would encourage you and your family to begin doing so. Pray for the following:

- a.) **State law-makers whose hearts need to be softened toward homeschooling families**
 - i.) Attorney General Dana Nessel
 - ii.) State Representative Matt Koleszar (House Education Committee Chair)
 - iii.) State Senator Dayna Polehanki (Senate Education Committee Chair)
 - iv.) Governor Gretchen Whitmer
 - v.) Your own state representative and state senator
 - b.) **State law-makers fighting for the rights of homeschoolers**
 - i.) State Representative Jaime Greene
 - ii.) State Representative Gina Johnsen
 - iii.) State Representative Luke Meerman
 - iv.) State Senator Lana Theis
 - v.) State Senator Ruth Johnson
 - c.) **Your MiCHN Team:** We are working and communicating non-stop in order to make sure we are understanding and pursuing all the right channels we need to in order to give this the best fight possible. We are all volunteers. We are tired. We have families. Please pray for strength, perseverance, and protection.
- 2.) **Educate yourself on the issue.** You can't defend to your family and friends what you truly don't understand. Below you will find a few resources we have compiled to make it easier for you. Please visit each website and familiarize yourself with the arguments to defend home education against these ridiculous arguments about abuse.
- a.) <https://www.nheri.org/child-abuse-and-neglect-of-the-homeschooled-versus-the-conventionally-schooled-groundbreaking-study/>
 - b.) <https://homeschoolfreedom.com/homeschooling-and-abuse>
 - c.) <https://homeschoolingbackgrounder.com/>
- 3.) **Talk to EVERYONE!** Word of mouth is the best way forward right now. Make sure you are sharing this information with everyone you know. GET THE WORD OUT.
- 4.) **Be prepared to sacrifice your TIME.** Come January, things could ramp up quickly in Lansing.
- a.) Strategize with your family and friends and come to Lansing to sit in on education committee meetings. Lawmakers in Lansing listen to those who show up. Let's pack the committee meetings. If your children are well behaved, bring them along. This is a great opportunity for them to experience civics first-hand.
 - b.) Phone calls to your state senator and state representative is a HUGE thing you can do. You can find their contact information by visiting the state's website for your lawmaker. If you live in Representative Koleszar or Senator Polehanki's districts, this is IMPERATIVE!!
 - i.) <https://www.house.mi.gov/>
 - ii.) <https://senate.michigan.gov/FindYourSenator/>

- c.) Write a letter to your state senator or state representative. We have attached a form letter you are more than welcome to use. **Please note:** most lawmakers agree these letters do NOT do much to persuade them. When they receive form letters, they often end up in a bin never to be read. MiCHN would recommend you utilize our draft as a starting point and create your own letter to your lawmakers.
- 5.) **Financial Support.** As mentioned above, everyone at MiCHN are volunteers. They volunteer their time, gifts/talents, and experience to fight for you. Every dollar you donate to MiCHN goes directly to the fight we are about to face. Please prayerfully consider partnering with us through an end-of-year [donation](#). We are a 501c3 and your donation is tax deductible.
- 6.) **Prepare your homeschool.** We at MiCHN recommend you:
- a.) Become a member of [HSLDA](#) right now. The threat is looming and you want to make sure you're legally ready for any fight ahead.
 - b.) Keep records. We do not know yet what this bill will look like and what they hope to impose on us. By keeping records, you are preparing yourself for what could be ahead.
 - c.) Sign-up at our [website](#) to receive legislative updates. While it is not our goal to spam your email, things in Lansing can change quickly. The best and quickest way to communicate with all of you is through our email system.

The last thing we want to mention is that we are strategizing and planning a Facebook/Twitter Live video where you can engage with us and ask us questions directly. While the details of this event are still forthcoming, we want you to be aware and be on the lookout. This will be a great opportunity for you to come directly to us with your questions regarding all the above and the situation quickly unfolding in our state's capital. We love and appreciate each and every one of you. You and your families are why we do what we do. Keep your faith in the Lord, rest in Him and His peace. Through it all, He remains sovereign.

Your MiCHN Legislative Team:
Israel Wayne-Vice President
Shanté Pickford-Legislative Director
Patti Sailor-Legislative Liaison

Representative/Senator,

I wanted to take a moment and thank you for your dedication and contribution in making the lives of all Michiganders better. You have a hard job and it is often thankless. While I want to make clear my gratitude to you, I do have a major concern I need to address. Recently, I was made aware of the desires of some in Lansing to introduce a bill that would dramatically hinder the freedoms of law-abiding citizens simply for choosing to home educate their own children.

I am 100% against any and all forms of abuse and believe the laws Michigan has already established against such behaviors need to be enforced when an individual is found to be guilty of such heinous activity. No child should be ignored by the very people who could ultimately help them escape their abusers. I want to make sure this point is clear.

Our laws governing home education in Michigan, as they are today, are some of the best and most flourishing aspects of our state. It is a rich community full of diversity and it continues to grow. We have seen home education impact the greater Detroit areas in a meaningful way. These parents deciding to sacrifice so much in order to give their children the best possible education are not the enemy. They are ensuring Michigan's future.

While some try to claim home education is simply a farce and cover up for neglect and abuse, the statistics do not agree. I would direct your attention to research from the National Home Education Research Institute. In their latest article they state, "*Cross-sectional findings suggest that school sector is a non-issue after considering the role played by demographics. That is, child abuse and neglect are significantly associated with family structure, years in foster care, large family size, and household poverty.*" The article continues, "*Homeschooling and child abuse is not the issue, and conventional school and child abuse is not the issue; rather, demographics are the key to explaining differences in rates of maltreatment.*" There is one last thing you must be aware of that NHERI found within their latest studies. They found "*If anything, the weak incidences of child abuse among homeschoolers are not related to family, but with school and community. That is, the maltreatment is not happening at home and within the family but by others at places and activities such as at co-ops (co-operatives), part-time classes at a public or private school or a pod, museums, sports activities, music lessons, scouts, church or synagogue, or a play group.*" You can find more information at nheri.org. I would request you take some time and familiarize yourself with their work.

Home education is not the problem. I sincerely ask you to oppose and work against any bill, order, rule, or regulatory changes that would affect homeschooling as it exists today in Michigan.

Best regards,