

Homeschool Shut Down

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At the intersection of freedom of religion and freedom of education there is the question of homeschooling. Should parents or government-approved educational professionals have primary authority and responsibility for the education of the next generation?

The government has a vested interest in the education of children. Well-educated children tend to become more productive adults capable of sustaining our economy. Are the educational systems of the provinces of this country living up to this expectation? Opinions vary widely!

Education is about more than just training students to become workers, though. It is about training students to think critically about ideas and concepts.

It is also about morality.

This is a challenge, and there is no way around it. Whose morality will be taught, and why? Parents who choose private schools with a religious foundation and those who homeschool are making a conscious decision about the training of their children and about the morality that their children will learn.

When evaluating the success or failure of current education systems, what criteria should be used? Perhaps the projected or real earnings of graduates might be considered or perhaps the crime rates of home schooled youth compared to government schooled youth. Homeschooling is not a magical answer to problems, but it has earned a reputation for higher levels of respect and academic outcome.

Full disclosure: I was homeschooled. You will assume that I am biased, and I won't deny it. But, I can also be critical and see the challenges that homeschoolers and their parents face. For many parents, it is not only about academic outcomes, though they are important, but also about educating their children in harmony with their faith and training them to become caring, loving, concerned, and committed individuals, spouses, parents, workers, and citizens. Homeschooling is a lifestyle and a culture.

Alberta's NDP government does not like it. Maybe that is no surprise; they believe in government control from cradle to grave. What is surprising is that they closed down an institution responsible for supervising the homeschooling of over 3,500 children. The government has claimed financial irregularities, and this may need to be addressed, but shutting down the group without warning¹ is not fair from a legal perspective according to lawyer John Carpay. The group itself posted a statement² on its home page addressing some of the accusations against them, though they have not been given the opportunity to address the accusations directly.

If the Alberta government was truly concerned about the students, would they have suddenly shut down this "school" without warning or discussion? Probably not. Disrupting schools and classes should be the last thing that education ministers want to do. Perhaps homeschoolers are the exception.

Governments have an interest in children growing up to become productive citizens but they also want them to become productive voters; productive in the sense that they will elect governments with the same values for the future...they may fear that homeschooling produces independent thinkers with less opportunity for governmental influence.

Whether you prefer private schools or homeschooling, please take this as a warning; this Alberta group is being shut down now, but when the freedom of some is threatened, the freedom of all is threatened. A government that will shut down a Christian school today may tomorrow shut down any other institution with which it disagrees. Please follow this link³ to the petition and show your support for parental rights.

Homeschoolers do face challenges with accreditation; this CBC story⁴ focuses on the challenges of one former student of the group in question. No group or system is perfect, but working through the problems and coming up with solutions is much better than shutting the whole group down.

CHP supports the rights of parents, rather than the state, to have the primary role in educating their children. That means that parents should be consulted on major changes to curriculum; they were not in Ontario's recent changes to the sex-ed curriculum. Parents are also being disrespected in Alberta, where their choices are being limited⁵ by previous attempts to force a particular world view on homeschoolers and in the present by discrediting the parents' choice of homeschooling.

Healthy, productive societies are made from healthy, productive families. CHP recognizes this and our policies promote this.

If you are not a member of CHP Canada, join your voice with ours⁶. It's time to battle for your rights... before they are lost.

Extra Information

If you want to hear the author of this Communique interviewed on a variety of subjects, listen to this podcast: It's Time To Talk⁷

Footnotes

¹ www.edmontonsun.com/2016/10/28/david-eggens-homeschool-closure-unfair-to-parents

² <https://wisdomhomeschooling.com/about/news/346-message-to-parents-oct29>

³ www.change.org/p/education-minister-david-eggen-education-under-attack-re-instate-trinity-christian-school-association-s-accreditation

⁴ www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/shocking-allegations-against-christian-school-show-need-for-regulation-says-graduate-1.3827504

⁵ www.barrheadleader.com/article/Education-minister-must-draw-a-line-that-is-not-crossed-20161018

⁶ www.chp.ca/get-involved

⁷ itstimetotalk.podbean.com/e/episode-5-peter-vogel-of-the-christian-heritage-party-of-canada/

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