

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Conference Announcement

Connecticut State Senator Eric Berthel, State Representative Karen Reddington-Hughes, Family Institute of Connecticut Action, The Education Association of Christian Homeschoolers of CT (TEACH CT), ?? and allied legislators and advocates will hold a press conference to address civil rights, federal law and fairness concerns related to HB 5468:

Location: Room 1B, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, CT

Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026

Time: 10:00 AM

Members of the media, legislators, and the public are invited to attend.

Civil Rights Concerns Intensify Over HB 5468: “Presume Families Innocent—Not Guilty”

Hartford, CT — A coalition of legislators, advocates and homeschool organizations is raising serious constitutional concerns about **HB 5468**, warning that the bill undermines due process, violates federal privacy law (FERPA), and unfairly targets homeschooling families for government scrutiny.

HB 5468, recently passed by the Connecticut House, would require some families seeking to homeschool to undergo a Department of Children and Families (DCF) “records check” **for all members of their household** without probable cause. Critics argue that the bill conditions a fundamental parental right on government screening without individualized suspicion.

Due Process and Warrantless Disclosure Concerns

Under proposed amendments, families may be required to disclose the names of all household members as part of a DCF records check. Civil liberties advocates say this raises serious due process concerns.

“This is not targeted intervention—it is suspicionless screening,” said Peter Wolfgang, President Family Institute of Connecticut Action. “The government is demanding private household information without any allegation of wrongdoing. That is a fundamental departure from basic constitutional protections.”

Advocates warn that compelled disclosure of household members—without probable cause—resembles a warrantless search and erodes long-standing protections for family privacy.

Unfair Targeting of Homeschool Families

Opponents emphasize that HB 5468 singles out homeschool families for scrutiny not applied to other families.

“This bill treats homeschoolers as inherently suspicious,” said Karen Reddington-Hughes. “We should be focusing on bad actors, not placing broad burdens on law-abiding families exercising their rights.”

Homeschool advocates note that Connecticut law has historically allowed parents to withdraw children with minimal interference, and that HB 5468 represents a sharp shift toward government oversight.

FERPA Violations and Federal Risk

The bill has also drawn scrutiny for potential violations of the federal **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**.

“Lawmakers cannot claim that no data is being shared while simultaneously relying on FERPA exceptions that only apply when data *is* shared,” said Leslie Wolfgang, Attorney and Director of Public Policy for the Family Institute of Connecticut Action. “That contradiction exposes the state to legal risk and potential loss of federal education funding.”

Growing Civic Engagement Among Homeschool Families

Advocates say the bill comes at a time when homeschool families are becoming more engaged in the civic process—not less.

Across Connecticut, homeschooling parents are organizing informational webinars, educating one another on public policy, registering to vote in greater numbers, and even stepping forward to run for public office. What was once a largely quiet community is increasingly active in shaping state policy.

“This is a community that is learning, organizing, and participating in democracy,” said Donna Person, Vice President of TEACH CT.. “Instead of welcoming that engagement, HB 5468 risks sending the message that politically active families will be subject to greater scrutiny simply for choosing a different path in education.”

Homeschool Advocacy Groups Sound Alarm

National and state homeschool organizations have strongly opposed HB 5468, warning that the bill expands government oversight beyond what is necessary to protect children.

Advocates argue the proposal shifts Connecticut away from a system that trusts parents toward one that monitors them.

Legislative Opposition In the Senate

Opposition is also emerging within the legislature.

“This proposal raises serious constitutional questions,” said Eric Berthel. “We must protect children, but we cannot do so by eroding parental rights and due process protections for every family in the state.”

Critics note that existing child protection laws already empower DCF to investigate credible cases of abuse—without imposing blanket screening on families who choose homeschooling.

A Question of Balance

While supporters of HB 5468 argue the bill is needed to prevent tragic cases of abuse, opponents maintain that it overreaches.

“This is about balance,” said Pam Lucashu, Legislative Liaison for TEACH CT. “We can protect children without treating every homeschooling family as a suspect. Civil rights do not disappear simply because a parent chooses a different educational path.”

About Family Institute of Connecticut Action

Family Institute of Connecticut Action is a nonprofit public policy organization dedicated to strengthening families, protecting constitutional rights, and promoting policies that respect parental authority in education.

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