

House Education Committee

Proponent for **Senate Bill 60**

By Tracy L. Sealine

March 17, 2015

Dear Chairman Highland,

I am writing this letter in response to a question posed by my friend, Tricia Stockebrand, about homeschool laws and how they impact our decision on where to live. Adrian, our five children, and I are currently living in Sioux City, IA. When we moved to Sioux City, we had the choice of three states to live in. The homeschooling laws in Iowa were one of the factors that led to us purchasing a home in Iowa, rather than in Nebraska. Adrian could be transferred to either Omaha, NE or St. Joseph, MO, where we would once again be able to choose between states. We have also considered moving to Kansas to live near Mom and Dad, even going so far as to look into career opportunities there.

Homeschooling in Kansas is one of the factors that has kept us from pursuing a move there. In Iowa, our children have more opportunities than they would in Kansas. I have no paperwork to file unless the children are dual enrolled, and then the paperwork is minimal. I may choose to enroll them at the Hinton Community School for as much or as little of the day as would best serve our family. Rachel took band at the school last year. Next year, she would like to play basketball and soccer. At some point, I may enroll her or one of the others in a math or science class. Caden will take his standardized test through the school this year. All of our dealings with the local school have been friendly and professional. Should I be unable to homeschool due to illness or injury, I would trust the Hinton School District to want the best for my children. They've already proven that they do.

Contrast our experience to the nightmare your experience has been. If we moved to Kansas, we would currently have three choices. We could enroll our children in public school, completely opt out of public school life, or enroll in one of the programs Mary Claire Stockebrand tried and also spend an hour at the school. Homeschooling is as much a lifestyle choice for us as it is an educational choice. By enrolling in public school, we would give up not only an education tailored to each child but also the very rhythm of our family life. Yet, in many Kansas towns, completely opting out of public school life would disenfranchise the kids from community life as well. In most small towns, the community is almost entirely based around the school. There isn't enough money in the town to build both school sports facilities and community centers.

How many small towns have community bands and art classes? How many have community language and academic clubs. Here in Sioux City, my kids participate in martial arts, community soccer through age 13, and fencing. What does the average small town in Kansas have to replace those activities outside of school?

My third choice, the online program, is the worst option of the three. I have no desire to retain the responsibility to educate my children, while giving up the freedom to do so in a way that serves them best. I am not afraid of a rigorous education. I spend hundreds of hours each year researching education and planning my kids' education. My kids work hard, but they also enjoy school. I will never reduce their education to sitting in front of a computer eight hours a day. I will not trade Latin, Greek, logic, hours of reading good literature, Art of Problem Solving math courses, a chronological history cycle, morning read alouds, and long lunch breaks for a glitchy computer based program that is both too hard and too easy. Math should be hard because it is challenging, not because it needs to be typed into a computer.

I am not the only homeschooler who has had to factor homeschool laws into a decision on where to live. We are a mobile society and the number of homeschooling families grows each year. Many families choose where to live based on homeschool laws. I invite you to research the question on homeschool message boards. The Well Trained Mind Forum is a large and active one.

Sincerely,

Tracy L. Sealine

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