Good Morning Chairman Sonney, Ranking Member Roebuck, and members of the Education Committee. My name is Angela Davis and I am the Director of Support Services and Administration for Christian Homeschool Association of Pennsylvania also known as CHAP.

We are a non-profit organization with over 1000 active member families and thousands of children being homeschooled in compliance with Pennsylvania’s Homeschool Law of 2014.

Our mission is to provide support to homeschooling families who partner with us to equip, connect, encourage and protect those interested in homeschooling. We seek to prepare the next generation to follow Christ in all their life.

CHAP is opposed to House Bill 593 and the proposed changes to expand the compulsory attendance ages for the following reasons -- The proposed legislation creates unnecessary burdens upon the time and financial resources of homeschooling families.

As the Committee is aware, homeschooling parents must file a notarized affidavit, record hours of instruction, maintain a portfolio, including required testing. They must have their children evaluated by a qualified evaluator and submit the evaluator’s certification to the superintendent of the local school district. This activity is required by the current law to begin at age eight (8) and continue through age seventeen (17).

It goes without saying, yet it must be said in this forum that homeschooling works. It works in Pennsylvania, as this committee has recognized in previous hearings, statements and documents.

Prior to 2014, Pennsylvania was viewed as one of the five most difficult states in which to homeschool. In 2014, the Homeschool Law was improved and families gained more freedom to educate their children. Some of the burdensome regulations were removed and liberty was increased.

Legislation may have unintended consequences and create additional and unnecessary burdens upon families.

The proposed legislation would now require parents to engage in the process of filing for an additional two (2) or three (3) years, thus requiring additional recordkeeping and documentation. It would require families to incur the additional expenses of at least two or three years of evaluations for each child in the family. This is an additional unnecessary burden.

Our concern is not just limited to homeschooling families. This legislation will also place additional and unnecessary time, work and financial expenditures on the local school districts. They will have to maintain additional affidavits and yearly objectives. It would also require the superintendent in the local districts to obtain additional evaluations. No legislation comes without increased expenditures which impact on the local taxpayers.

CHAP has no paid lobbyists or political action committees to make political contributions. CHAP is comprised of hard-working taxpayers who desire to educate their children as they believe best meets the needs of their children. In homeschooling, the parents make significant personal and financial sacrifices.
For our families, it is a calling and commitment of love to their children and the Lord. The families of CHAP exercise their God-given rights and liberty interests to educate their children in the manner which is best for their children and their family.

Homeschoolers are an important but, sometimes forgotten population of the Pennsylvania education community. We oppose this legislation as it places additional and unnecessary burdens upon our families.

Parents can and do enroll their children before age eight to attend school. Our current law permits that to occur. The law does not say, “you are required to not enroll your child until they are eight years old.” Homeschooling parents can and do educate their children before age eight.

Would this bill require that a homeschooled child who is prepared and qualified to graduate high school before the age of 18 be prohibited from graduating? Does this bill prevent a homeschooled student from graduating prior to turning age 17?

Please do not return to the old days of unnecessary regulations and micromanaging from Harrisburg. Let liberty flourish in a time when it may not be valued by some.

Please reject this intrusive piece of legislation as it will increase the tax burden on all the families of Pennsylvania. Increased regulations initiate the need for additional tax dollars. Family funds should be allocated to other expenditures rather than more taxes.

If you have any questions or a desire for further dialog, please feel free to contact the CHAP office or chaponline.com.

Better yet, please attend and visit us at our annual homeschool convention held on June 14th and 15th, 2019, at the Lancaster County Convention Center. Meet first hand with our board, staff and families. We have attendee families not just from our state of Pennsylvania, but families travel to attend our convention from surrounding states.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to share CHAP’s view for opposing this legislation.