

# 'OK Boomer...' I'm Gonna Keep Homeschooling My Children

As a homeschooling father, I am no stranger to explaining our family's choice to home educate our children:

*"Yes, they have plenty of socialization with other children."*

*"Yes, we teach all the subjects."*

*"No, you can simply buy the curriculum and it tells you what to do."*

By now I have the answers memorized. You can imagine my cringing, then, when reading Harvard Law Professor Elizabeth Bartholet's recent [article in Arizona Law Review](#), calling for an outright ban on homeschool and the curtailment of private schools as well!

Bartholet's rationale for banning home education is that public schools provide assurances that children receive an education and are protected from abuse. Because teachers are required to report suspicions of abuse, abusive parents could decrease their chances of detection by removing their children from school. She also argues that the state has no assurance homeschooled children actually receive an education (an inaccurate claim: [most states do oversee homeschoolers](#)).

Bartholet makes several major missteps in her analysis. First, she admits that there is not enough data to reach conclusions. She also generalizes the entire homeschool population from extreme anecdotes and small case studies. Reasonable individuals realize that using outliers to represent an entire population is no way to justify extreme policy. Perhaps even more strange is a study featured in Bartholet's paper. Instead of proving that homeschool is a haven for child abuse, the study appears to show that [abuse-by-homeschool is 37](#)

times less prevalent than the general rate.

The large-scale data generally contradicts Bartholet's "no-education" claim, showing that homeschoolers are well-prepared for college and beyond. One study of over 16,000 college freshman found that homeschooled children had higher standardized test scores, higher college GPAs, and higher college graduation rates than their peers (a similar study found the same).

Yet Bartholet assumes that children *are* receiving an acceptable level of education and physical protection in public schools. As it turns out, that may not be a valid assumption. Over 7 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> grade children reported being sexually abused by a teacher or coach, and there is some evidence that teachers are reluctant to report suspected abuse by another teacher for "fear of ruining their life." As if that were not enough, almost half of all students report being bullied at least once in the past month. Public schools have not protected the physical well-being of their students nearly well enough.

The stats on educational attainment are not much better. According to the NCES, only about one in three high school seniors are considered to have achieved a proficient or advanced reading level. Mathematics is worse, with only one in four seniors considered proficient or advanced. I can wholeheartedly agree with Professor Bartholet that children deserve a strong education, but the data disagrees with her that such an education is currently guaranteed in public schools.

I suspect Bartholet's proposed ban has little to do with the protection and education of children and more to do with a war for their minds. Bartholet, despite her rhetoric, appears worried that she cannot control what *values* parents teach their children. It is here that Bartholet paints homeschooling parents as generally religious, misogynistic, racist, and

anti-science. Yet again, the [data](#) does not support this. Most parents cite safety, bullying, or peer pressure as their primary reason for choosing home education. Around one in five parents list academic rigor as their primary reason. A mere 17 percent of parents listed a desire for religious instruction as the primary reason for choosing to educate their children at home. In almost every way, the homeschooling population is [representative of society](#) – we are average folks.

So, yes Professor Bartholet, our children get lots of socialization. Yes, we do real schoolwork with real curriculum. Yes, we protect our children from abuse. But you never asked the important question: *Why do we homeschool?* Though no homeschool parent owes anyone an explanation, I will share why our family has chosen this path.

We homeschool because we live in an age of absurdity. Though we are swimming in words, truth and understanding are nigh extinct. Literacy, once a great gift, has ensured an incessant supply of beguiling wordsmiths pulling our hearts to enslave our minds. If literacy is to be of any value, education must serve to emancipate the mind. We homeschool so our children's minds are not slaves to these clever wordsmiths. We homeschool to arm our children with the tools to master words rather than serve them. That is not to say you cannot achieve the same in public school. But a ban on homeschool (and private school) means education becomes an enforced monopoly, and enforced monopolies, as I'm sure you'd agree, are not particularly effective at cultivating intellectual diversity.

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