

Open Letter to the Homeschool Community

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I have some questions. Do you?

NHELD has been following the Harvard Summit and the philosophy espoused by the participants to presumptively ban, or have parents seek permission and be stringently regulated, if they want to homeschool.

NHELD always has stood for, and fought for, freedom from all government regulation of the right of parents to educate their own children, and always has rejected compromise. We draw a line for freedom, and stand firm.

We have researched, thought, discussed, and have tried to put the puzzle pieces together about whether HSLDA will do the same, especially concerning the Harvard Summit.

Here is some of what we know, and some things about which we would like answers.

Who first widely circulated the announcement that the Harvard Summit was to take place?

Answer: HSLDA (Homeschool Legal Defense Association, founded by Michael Farris, and employing other attorneys, such as Michael Donnelly.)

What did HSLDA say about the Summit in that first announcement?

Answer: HSLDA "**would love to attend**" the Summit; it "looks like a fascinating line-up of speakers"; and "we know that many parents homeschool to protect their children from abuse, so if you have questions about the summit", you can contact Harvard for further details, including about the "limited number of hotel rooms for summit attendees."

Upon hearing the agenda topics, and researching the speakers who will attend the Summit, many parents became alarmed and upset that the Summit proponents will be discussing ways to take away parental rights and freedom to homeschool, and so began several protest movements.

Parents are furious, so is NHELD, but what about HSLDA? Are they furious about it, or not? Hard to tell.

What has HSLDA said since making the initial announcement and indicating they "would love to attend"?

Answer: Michael Donnelly has posted a few times, stating things such as:

"I and others have **requested invitations to the conference** but have been rejected";

"we will be watching it's (sic) progress and programming carefully";

"we reject the premise of the conference".

Parents asked HSLDA's Michael Donnelly if he has any recommendations for parents to take any action. What was Donnelly's response?

Answer: "In a nutshell I **didn't recommend any specific action** at this time".

HSLDA's President, J. Michael Smith, later came out with another reply. What did that state?

Answer: "By publishing an article highlighting Professor Elizabeth Bartholet's call for a presumptive ban on home education Harvard Magazine **may have actually done the homeschooling movement a favor**".

He then quoted other in the homeschooling community taking Bartholet and the Summit proponents to task.

Smith, however, never offered a word of his own against the Summit or its proponents.

What is the only statement by HSLDA that hints at their position, other than they "would love to attend" the Summit?

Answer: In HSLDA's initial announcement, Donnelly stated, "We continue to exercise to defend the homeschooling community from unwarranted and unreasonable government intrusion."

While thousands of homeschooling parents have stated their opinions about how wrong the Summit and the proponents philosophy is, and vowed steadfast opposition and action against it, and looking at HSLDA's statements, NHELD has some questions.

Why hasn't HSLDA come out with any strong statement in opposition to the Summit?

Why has HSLDA been so meek about it?

Why would HSLDA "love to attend" the Summit, instead of openly, and vehemently, protesting its existence and philosophy?

Let's look at some other pieces of the puzzle.

Why wouldn't HSLDA come out with a full frontal attack on people who want to completely eviscerate the rights of parents, not only to educate their children, but also to be called a parent?

Let's look at some of the history of HSLDA.

Are there any patterns here?

Well, we know that Michael Farris, the founder of HSLDA has a particular philosophy about the rights of parents. He clearly stated his philosophy when he explained why he wants to amend the Constitution to give power to the federal government over parents and children that the federal government never has had. He said,

"Parental rights should not be absolute", and "We