

Senator Speeches from Floor of the Senate
Senate Resolution 8622
March 16, 2005

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator Stevens.

SENATOR STEVENS: Thank You Mr. President, I move that the resolution be adopted.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator Stevens moves that the resolution be adopted. Senator Stevens.

SENATOR STEVENS: Thank You, Mr. President. It is with great honor and privilege that I rise to speak in support of the homeschoolers that we have here in the State of Washington. Many of you, I know, have made great sacrifices giving the children who maybe do not get to go to the government school system and those of you who parents have decided to stay home and educate your children. We honor you. We thank you. You are educating the future leaders of our nation. How can I say that? Well, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Chamber, if you will take note, we have passed out three different articles. One, the New York Times, from the year 2000, where it states, "Home School Pupils are Making Colleges Sit Up and Take Notice. They are among top scorers at the SAT and they defy certain stereotypes." Thank You, Mr. President, for allowing me to read that title. Two more articles. One, "Vancouver Teen Wins National Geographic Spelling Bee." The next one, "Homeschoolers Storm National Spelling Bee." The opportunity that homeschoolers have is often said to be the reason that they are being educated, that after all you have one-on-one opportunities, that after all you get the undivided attention of your parents and certainly their support. Yes, that is true. But, it goes beyond that. Because you are being educated in the things that really count in life. You are being educated on the matters that will carry you for the rest of your lives. You are being taught solid principles. You are not having to learn what is wrong so that then someone can say, "But you should do what is right." You are being taught what is true and what is right and that is why you will be the future leaders of our world, and I so appreciate it and I thank all of you Ladies and Gentlemen of this Chamber for supporting this resolution. Thank You.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator Hargrove.

SENATOR HARGROVE: Thank You, Mr. President. I just have a few words to say here. Every study I've seen on educational achievement says that parental involvement is key to that, whether it be in our public schools or home schools. Of course, homeschooling is just the Cadillac of parental involvement and parents that homeschool their kids have chosen to give up the second income, as well as pay taxes, as well as pay for all of their curriculum, as well as stay home and educate their kids. I don't really see it's a sacrifice, though, I see it's a privilege. We homeschooled our children. My oldest is now almost twenty-three years of age, a graduate of the University of Washington. My second graduated from Gray's Harbor College and was an honor student. And my youngest who likes to do nothing but play baseball and Nintendo scored post-high school as a freshman in all of his California Achievement Tests. So, they teach in public education, too. Just one other thing that I would like to say here, I just recently had the University of Washington come by because they'd done some notification work for me to make sure homeschoolers knew how to apply to get into the school and the registrar just told me that they had just admitted a thirteen-year-old homeschool student to the University of Washington this fall who scored 1560 on his SAT Test and has just completed his first quarter at the University of Washington with 31 credits of science classes and is carrying a 3.9. This is a thirteen-year-old homeschooled student that is now at the University of Washington. Just another example of a fine home schooling student. I would certainly encourage your support of the resolution.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator McAuliffe.

SENATOR MC AULIFFE: Thank You, Mr. President. I still support the resolution. I also want to thank the senator from the twenty-fourth district for educating me on the value of homeschooling the past twelve years. I definitely want to salute those parents who take the time, the energy, and have the commitment to homeschool their children. I want to honor them and salute them. But mostly, I'd like to read you a note from a homeschooling family today, that I received in my office, if I may, Mr. President.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator McAuliffe.

SENATOR MC AULIFFE: "Thank You for supporting homeschoolers with Senate Resolution 8622. Homeschooling allows my children to learn at an advanced level, to pursue all of their interests, and to have the freedom in their schedule to travel and experience the world at large. We greatly appreciate the freedom that Washington State Law gives us to homeschool our children." I don't think I could have said it any better, and I

wanted to honor the people that work so hard for their children and support them in this way by honoring the resolution today.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator Pflug.

SENATOR PFLUG: Thank You, Mr. President. I, too, have had the joy of homeschooling two of my four children, and I know well the commitment of time and effort that it takes, but I also will say that I just cherish the memory of those years, and I want to salute the families that take advantage of this opportunity, thank my colleagues for preserving a very permissive state law, that I think benefits every citizen in Washington. We know, my numbers may be a little out of date but as I recall, homeschooled students score, or pass the WASL at a rate of about eighty-six percent, hugely above the average success rate of our public school students. This is a wonderful gift that these families give in educating fine young people for the future of our state, and hats off to you. Thank You.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator Shelton.

SENATOR SHELTON: Thank You, Mr. President. I also want to rise and recognize the homeschoolers and their parents and guardians and the people that really make this work. I've had the great fortunate experience of having our daughter homeschooled. Of course, I did very little. My wife devoted herself to it while I was down here and doing other jobs. And, they had a great experience together. Some of the things they did were fantastic. They got on a train and traveled to the east coast. They did things that could have never done if our child had been in school. Alex says she went through homeschool, we called it the Tree Farm School, that she was enrolled in with my wife. She also went to Shelton High School for a time and took a couple of classes, Spanish and Art, in the morning and then went home and studied at home. She did not get a high school diploma, obviously. But, when she applied to college, she wanted to go to the University of Washington, she talked to, this little tip...I hope it helps, she talked to some people here in Olympia, she got the exact transcript form that public school students use, that is used for their college applications, so when that same form was filled out with Tree Farm School on the top, and my wife signed as teacher and I signed as principal, I think it went in the same stack that was considered. She was accepted at the University of Washington in the top ten percent of the class that year, and is on the Dean's List with a major in Political Science as a junior this year, so homeschoolers can do well and just get into the process and compete and you'll come out on top. Thank You.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Senator Benson.

SENATOR BENSON: Thank You, Mr. President. I was writing this under Shelton, until I heard she was studying Political Science and now I'm starting to worry. But, anyway, I just want to add something, a little different comment. There's a book that I read when I was seventeen years old in college that somebody gave me and it was called "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance." I don't know how many people here have read it, but when my friend handed it to me, I said, "I don't want to read about Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance." She said, "No, no, read it, you'll like it!" You know, the book is ostensibly about two people that are traveling; one person had the expert do all of the maintenance on his car, or on his motorcycle. The other person does all of his own maintenance. But, what the story is really about is quality education, and the point of the story is that quality comes from character, and that nobody cares more about their kids, nobody cares more about their kids than their parents. I think that's the, we see the results in homeschooling, but it's something we need to remember with every policy we're doing down here, that nobody cares more about their kids than the parents do, and I'm reminded also of Senator Graham one time was having a conversation in a senate committee, and the person that was talking said, "I think I care every bit as much about your kids, Senator Graham, as you do." And Senator Graham's response was, "Oh yeah, what are their names?" So, anyway, I encourage your support of this and I encourage that we remember the quality education that parents give their children in the homeschooling environment and also the quality that we get for relying on the parents to make good judgments for their kids. Thank You.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: The question before the Senate is adoption of Senate Resolution 8622. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye.

SENATORS: Aye.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Those opposed, No. The Ayes have it. The resolution is adopted. Senator Shin.
SENATOR SHIN: Thank You, Mr. President. My personal privilege.

LT. GOVERNOR OWEN: Please state your personal privilege.

SENATOR SHIN: Thank you. During the discussion in the Senate majority, I stood up seven times wanting to speak, but without success. If I don't speak here today, I think I'll cry, so I am going to say it. Ladies and Gentlemen, the United States of America was number one in the world during World War II, Korean War and the Viet Nam War because of our quality education. Today, unfortunately, we are slipping behind. As you know, I travel a lot overseas. Until twelve years ago we still maintained number one. Today we are number ninth in the world. That saddens me. I congratulate homeschooled students. I am homeschooled myself, too. I came here to this country when I was eighteen. I had to start at ABC's, and GED, and then my PH.D., but what is happening in our country bothers me. I would like to remind the members of the U.S Senate and also the parents, education is a full-time importance of a job. Educating our children, this depends on us. Without our support, whether at home or a resident apartment, education is a full-time responsibility of the generation today, because in the 21st Century, we are looking for thinkers not the Lakers. And thinking people come from, through education. Now that I have made my peace, thank you for listening. I thank you.