

- Extensive mediation and violation sections, with punishments defined up to thirty days in jail or fines of \$1000.
- Stipulations that required truancy officers to immediately report suspected truants to the county attorney – and that required the county attorney to investigate unexcused absences to determine if the child required CINA.
- Conditions allowing only homeschools in which an Iowa licensed teacher provided the children direct instruction an exemption from a long list of additional requirements (no private supervising teacher arrangements were defined).
- Directives that required all students in homeschools without an Iowa licensed teacher providing direct instruction to:
 - Undergo an initial screening by the Area Education Agency (AEA) or other approved source to determine whether the child needed special education services – under the condition that this initial screening be completed by June 1 of the year before the child began homeschooling,
 - Submit to annual testing to determine whether adequate progress was being made, and
 - Dual enroll in the public school – and every school district was required to hire licensed personnel to “provide instructional services on a consulting basis” to dual enrolled homeschooled students.

The newly designed SF 149 traveled first to the Democrat-controlled House for approval. There, it quickly and easily passed and was rushed across the rotunda to the

Democrat-controlled Senate. The circumstances appeared grim, at best.

Homeschoolers packed the Senate chamber balcony in silence to watch the proceedings. The floor debate commenced. Well-worn statements, both pro and con, were orated. Then, a quite unexpected thing happened.



Senator Jim Riordan, recognized as a loyal Democrat, rose to speak. Yes, this was the same Senator Riordan who had been invited to a meeting of the Dallas County Homeschool Support Group just months earlier! Senator Riordan boldly proclaimed his opposition to SF 149. Why? Because he was aware that this bill would adversely affect the homeschooling families he had come to know personally in his district – folks who he had regularly seen and heard, faithfully petitioning the legislature for protection. Senator Riordan declared that home educators should have the freedom, based upon the Constitution to practice their beliefs, and announced that he would vote against SF 149. (Senator Riordan later noted that several Democrat Party leaders had rebuked him for taking this action.) Following Senator Riordan’s remarks, several other senators rose to defend the right to homeschool from a Constitutional perspective.

At last, it came time for the final vote. Homeschoolers in the Senate gallery were praying fervently. The votes were tallied: 25 for the motion to approve the bill, and 24 against. Homeschoolers in the gallery gasped as they sensed defeat. Yet, God was not finished. The Senate President Pro Tempore announced that the motion needed an absolute majority – in other words, the motion needed 26 votes – to pass.

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