

# Beyond Capitol Day: Relationships Matter

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**M**erriam Webster dictionary defines a relationship as “The state of affairs existing between those having dealings.” Synonyms for relationships might be the “association” or “connection between people.”

Homeschool Iowa’s focus on relationships doesn’t limit our community to other homeschool supporters. Homeschool families walk a less-traveled road and often enjoy connections with like-minded families. These are easy relationships, comparing and sharing ideas, encouragements, and curriculums.

Do you have a relationship with your state senator or representative? Have you dropped a card in the mail this year encouraging your state senator regarding the upcoming legislative schedule? Perhaps send a colorful postcard sharing an appreciation for their support of homeschool laws?

Creating a relationship of trust with the man or woman making laws you live under begins with a foundation. A note explaining your family’s use of Iowa’s varied homeschooling laws, sharing a brief example of a child’s success creates a connection with elected officials who may or may not support Iowa’s homeschooling laws. These notes sent serve as the building blocks for a relationship that may be vital to maintaining Iowa’s homeschool freedoms.

You know how you meet someone, exchange a few pleasantries, and then don’t cross paths for a year? That isn’t someone you would rely upon to come jump-start your vehicle in subzero January. In order to ask that favor of a person, grow that relationship, you must communicate during the year.

I cherish our homeschooling rights in Iowa. As I’ve created legislative relationships, based upon mutual respect, my elected officials reach out to me to learn more. I’ve been asked to testify in education committees at the Iowa Statehouse. I have been asked my opinion about a proposed bill the representative is considering because, as a homeschool parent, they consider me an “expert.” It was a privilege to share our family’s journey with the ones who make our laws. All possible because God prompted me to build a connection with my representative.

Relationships weave the fabric required to communicate effectively. If the only times I contacted elected officials was to complain, our relationships would be strained. “Oh, no. It’s her again,” might be the response to my name. I don’t want that in a working relationship with the men and women who literally vote for the right to homeschool. I want to serve God by being a positive person sharing the Bible’s instructions to parents with legislators.

I hope you encourage your elected servants, perhaps finding common ground asking questions about the representative’s job or about their grandchildren. Curiosity is a trait homeschool parents possess. Use this trait and learn more about your legislators to build those relationships.

The dividends of your time pay off when a legislator, who thought he/she wanted to reduce homeschool rights, has met a real homeschool family. Your family will have educated and encouraged a legislator with personal homeschool educational