



13 June 2022

WARNING RE PROPOSED BELA BILL ON EDUCATION WRT HOME EDUCATION

The **Christian Democratic Party** (CDP) – in their Manifest of Hope 2022 - clearly supports parents in their choice of Public, Private or Home Schooling. We are therefore concerned with the Department of Education's (DBE) proposed Basic Education Amendment (BELA) Bill. This Bill will result in major changes to the laws governing not only public schooling, but also private and homeschooling. Unfortunately, as the proposed BELA Bill currently stands, it does NOT make SPECIFIC provision for cottage schools or homeschooling, but instead desires to regulate homeschooling under the same banner as public schooling.

Background to South African education

An educational 'curriculum' is a document drafted by the a Government. Teachers are expected to follow and mostly not question (NEWS 24, 2015) these policies. Unfortunately this creates a very narrow point of view, and gives the state the power and ability to impose their ideological agenda on young minds, as well as on cultural and social practices - very often in opposition to the parents' belief systems.

Outcomes-based education (OBE) was introduced by the ANC in 1997, with the goal of improving the quality of education in South Africa. Even though OBE had failed miserably in other countries, the ANC continued to pushed forward this educational policy. Unfortunately it also failed here - for various reasons: large class numbers, ill-discipline, lack of resources, lack of commitment, resistance to change, and lack of technology in many schools. OBE also added a higher level of administrative and research burden on teachers. In 2012, the ANC once again introduced a new curriculum called CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement), putting further strain on teachers as they were not provided with clear guidelines or resources. CAPS – seen as a top-down policy with teachers expected to implement it - is still the current educational policy. The problems with this curriculum are that it is too content heavy (children are overburdened with homework), very little depth of knowledge is developed (there are too many different topics to grasp), teachers have to adhere to a rigid schedule, over assessment of children which has created stress and depression, and training children into robots with very little creative thinking. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the inefficiencies and inequalities in the CAPS education. In 2021 UNICEF published a report on education in SA, which estimated that learners were anywhere from 75% to a full school year behind, and about 500,000 learners had dropped out of school.

Homeschooling

Since 2020, homeschooling numbers have increased in South Africa. Mayt parents decided to educate their own children – at home – away from overcrowded classrooms, bullying experiences, and undesirable school subjects being taught. In addition, taking responsibility for their own children's education, meant that individualism could be promoted, a flexible learning space could be created, children with potential learning difficulties could be given personal attention, and children could be

directed into career paths that suited their personalities, interests, and capabilities. The CDP supports this home education model.

Christian parents are aware of the Bible verse in Proverbs 22:6 which reads *“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* However, in 2003, the ANC banned confessional, sectarian religion from public schools (National Policy on Religion in Education, 2003), but ‘allowed the teaching of Religion Studies on condition these were offered in a fair and equitable manner’. For a Christian parent, it meant a secular arrangement that allowed all views and ‘gods’ to exist. Yet God clearly says in His Word *“Thou shalt not have other gods before me”* (Ex.20:3), and there are many events recoded in the Bible where people turned away from the true God, served other gods, and destruction and demise came upon them.

As technology has advanced quickly in the last few years, so too has the availability of homeschool subjects and curriculums, either via distance learning, or via direct download of information. This has enabled homeschool parents to introduce new and interesting subjects to their children, and enable them to pursue their passions, learn skills they would not otherwise have learnt at a standard school, and uphold family principles, cohesion, and discipline.

The CDP firmly believes that the DBE should not have any role in regulating home education, and that the current Children’s Act provides adequate protection for the homeschooled child.

Margy Kieser
CDP Party Secretary
cdpsecretary@cdp.org.za