***IMPORTANT*: DO NOT SEND THIS TEMPLATE IN AS IS – FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THIS TEMPLATE

* Words in black can be left as it is.
* Words in **red** must be **removed**.
* Words in blue must be RESTATED in your own words and the original blue words **REMOVED**.

If you are unsure of whether your submission is in order, feel free to send it to us at [defensor@pestalozzi.org](mailto:defensor@pestalozzi.org) before you submit it. We will be happy to have a quick look.

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XXth of [May/June], 2022

ATTENTION: Mr LA Brown

Dear Mrs BP Mbingo-Gigaba, Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Basic Education

**RE: BASIC EDUCATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL**

[Express gratitude for the opportunity to comment on the BELA Bill]

[State that you have concerns about the BELA Bill, specifically the amendments to section 51 of the SASA which deals with home education]

**Summary**

My main concerns are as follows:

* There was no meaningful consultation with home educators in the process of drafting the Bill.
* The changes to the SA Schools Act are not based on research.
* No credible SEIA was done on the Bill.
* The Bill does not account for the changes in the education environment since the COVID-19 pandemic.
* The nature and character of home education differs from school education, and therefore home education should not be regulated under the Schools Act.

**Introduction and Background**

[OPTIONAL – Introduce yourself and your family. How big is your family? How old is/are your child/ren? Etc.] [You do not need to disclose these personal details if you do not wish to do so. However, if the reader can picture you and your family as real people with real lives, the impact of your letter is much stronger.]

[Tell your story:

* How long you have been homeschooling;
* Why you started homeschooling;
* Any negative experience you have had with CAPS and/or schools;
* Any positive impact home education has had on your child/ren and/or family.]

[Explain:

* the curriculum and approach you use;
* why you chose it;
* how it benefits your family;
* If you are using an approach or curriculum other than CAPS, explain why you would not want your child to follow CAPS or be assessed against CAPS.]

**Substantive Comments**

Remember to restate each sentence/paragraph below in your own words. The easiest way to do that is to read through the sentence/paragraph, then write down what you remember without looking back to the original sentence/paragraph. Don’t just copy-and-paste!

1. There was no meaningful consultation with home educators in the drafting of the Bill

[Explain that, to your knowledge;

* the task team who wrote the BELA Bill consisted almost exclusively of DBE and PED officials;
* only one home educator served on the task team;
* this home educator served in her individual capacity and not as a representative of the homeschooling community; and
* a single homeschool curriculum supplier also served on the task team.]

[Explain that:

* the home educator used NCS/CAPS and the curriculum supplier offered NCS/CAPS;
* none of the more than twenty (20) other curricula, approaches, methodologies, and philosophies followed by home educators in South Africa were represented or consulted on.]

[State the following:

* which curriculum, approach, methodology, or philosophy you use;
* whether it was represented in the task team;
* whether the current BELA Bill allows you to continue following this curriculum / approach / methodology / philosophy.

[Point out that due to this limited consultation, the BELA Bill does not cater for the vast majority of home education approaches being used in South Africa.]

[Explain that:

* only a small number of changes were made to the Bill after the Bill was published for public comment; and
* that home education representatives after this comment period were told that the Bill was too far in the process and no major changes will be made.]

1. The changes to the SASA are not based on research

[Explain that the Minister admitted in the PCBE that the DBE has no research on home education – this while the need for research on home education was admitted in internal documents as early as 2015.

[Explain that, if there is no research, and no real consultation with home educators took place, there is no credible grounds on which to base such massive changes to the law.]

[State whether you would support research being done in the home education community or not.]

1. No credible SEIA was done on the BELA Bill

[Explain that:

* research is a fundamental prerequisite for a credible Socio-Economic Impact Assessment;
* without research, a credible Socio-Economic Impact Assessment cannot be done; and therefore
* the SEIA developed by the DBE is fundamentally flawed.

[Explain that, as a home educator, you believe the impact of this Bill on the home education sector will be massive. The Bill should not be allowed to proceed without a proper evaluation of the impact and possible unintended consequences of the Bill.]

1. The Bill does not account for the changes in the education environment since the COVID-19 pandemic

[Explain that:

* there have been substantial changes to the education environment since the development of this Bill started, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic.
* There are many alternative forms of education which the Bill does not account for, such as online/virtual schooling, micro/cottage schools, home education tutor centers, and co-operative homeschooling.
* This will cause much confusion in the education sector, as each person and each official will try to apply the law to a myriad of scenarios which the law does not take account of.]

1. The nature and character of home education is different from school education, and therefore home education should not be regulated under the Schools Act

[Name at least three differences between school education and home education (more if you can think of more!). Think about things such as:

* doing different grades in different subjects,
* learning in an integrated way so that facts are not learnt out of context,
* being able to follow you and your children’s religious / philosophical approach,
* always knowing exactly what your children know and therefore no need for formal testing, etc.

Think of things in your specific curriculum, methodology, approach, or philosophy which is different from the way things are done in school.

For each of these differences, explain:

* how the way things are done in school has had / can have a negative impact on your child/ren, and
* how the way things are done in home education has had / can have a positive impact on your child/ren.]

[State that since home education is so different from school education, it is highly problematic to try and regulate them in the same law.]

**Conclusion**

In light of the above points, I would like to ask the following:

1. That the home education sections of the BELA Bill be removed from the current SASA and new, appropriate legislation for home education be developed;
2. That the Bill will be changed to reflect the new educational reality after the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. That the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education would request a thorough Socio-Economic Impact Assessment that is developed through engagement with home educators so that members of parliament can know what the impacts of the BELA Bill will be; and
4. That the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education will meet with home education organizations, researchers, and parents to get the needed background to home education.

[If you would like the opportunity to address the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education in person (an oral submission), ask for that opportunity here.]

[Express gratitude for the opportunity to comment, as you do not feel as if your voice has been heard by government while the Bill was being prepared. Thank the Chairperson for considering your submission.]

Sincerely yours,

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR SENDING YOUR LETTER**

First proofread your letter:

1. Check for typos, missing words, etc.
2. Make sure you have added everything you wanted to say.
3. **Remove all red and blue words.**

Now you are ready to send your letter!

Open the submission form at this link: <https://pestalozzi.org/pestalozzi-letter/>. This is an automated system which keeps track of all letters sent. If you send your letter through this system, we will know if it is delivered, read, gets lost, or is deleted.

Now choose one of the following ways to send your submission:

1. **If you want your contact details to be publicly released with your submission**, do the following:

Copy-and-paste your submission into the first field (marked “Copy-and-paste your submission/cover letter here:”). **Make sure nothing that was written in red or blue is included.** Complete the rest of the fields at the bottom and click “Submit”. Your submission will be signed with your contact details and will be sent to the correct email addresses in parliament. You will also receive a copy of your submission in your inbox.

1. **If you do NOT want your contact details to be publicly released with your submission**, follow these steps:
2. Copy-and-paste your submission into a new Word document. **Make sure no blue or red words are included**. Make sure your name and surname are written at the bottom of your document in Word and save it in a PDF. Give it an appropriate title such as “Comment on the BELA Bill – Portfolio Committee of Basic Education”.
3. Copy-and-paste the following into the first field of the submission form (marked “Copy-and-paste your submission/cover letter here:”):

*Attention: Mr L A Brown*

*Dear Mrs B P Mbingo-Gigaba, Chairperson: Portfolio Committee on Basic Education*

*RE: BASIC EDUCATION LAWS AMENDMENT BILL*

*Please find attached my submission on the BELA Bill to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education.*

*For privacy reasons I do not wish my contact details to be publicly released with my submission.*

*Sincerely yours,*

1. Attach the PDF of your submission in the next field.
2. Complete all subsequent fields. The submission form will automatically sign your letter with the appropriate details.
3. Click “Submit”. Your submission will be signed with your contact details and sent to the correct email addresses in parliament. You will also receive a copy of your submission in your inbox.

**Remember that the office of Parliament will still be able to see your contact details. However, *only the PDF will be released publicly,* and not your contact details.** **Any submission made to Parliament, in whichever format, needs to show the details of the sender. Otherwise it might be regarded as spam or a bot message. If you are worried about whether it is dangerous to write to Parliament, please read our explanation** [**here**](https://pestalozzi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Is-it-dangerous-to-write-to-Parliament.pdf)**.**