

January 17, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, and Minority Leader Jeffries:

The *Promise to America's Parents* Coalition supports S. 3571 and H.R. 6934. We urge Congress to pass the Families' Rights and Responsibilities Act (FRRA). Protect families by preserving parental rights.

Our coalition of over 40 organizations represents parents across the political spectrum. Our members include parents from diverse political, racial, and religious backgrounds. We work at all levels of government to protect every parent's right to make decisions regarding their child's education and health care.

Our coalition has embraced the *Promise to America's Parents* (www.promisetoamericasparents.org) and its 10 principles for sound laws and policies that protect parental rights. These standards are based on government Accountability, Choice, and Transparency (ACT). The FRRA aligns with these principles.

Children flourish within strong families, led by their parents. Parents – not the government – play the primary role in raising their children. Parents have duties and corresponding natural rights to guide their children's care and upbringing. This includes their children's education and health care. Our country has long recognized the importance of families and the primary role of parents as decision-makers for their children.

Indeed, the U.S. Supreme Court has acknowledged that parental rights are among the "oldest of the fundamental liberty interests recognized by [the] Court." See *Troxel v. Granville* (2000). The Supreme Court has upheld parental rights as fundamental rights protected by the Constitution for over 100 years. However, some federal courts have failed to apply the strict scrutiny standard of review to parental rights. By applying an improper standard of judicial review, they have not treated parental rights as fundamental rights.

Amidst such confusion in the courts, federal laws and policies have encroached on the rights of parents at an alarming rate and to a greater degree.

Congress has the authority to put limits on federal government actions to protect the constitutional rights of parents. The FRRA instructs courts to apply the proper standard of review - strict scrutiny - to actions of the federal government that substantially burden parental rights.

This standard means that simply disagreeing with parenting choices is not enough to warrant government intrusion into the family realm. Instead, the government will need to show that it has a compelling interest for its policy and has used the least restrictive means to achieve its interest.

The family is the fundamental building block of American society. Therefore, government interference with parental educational choices, moral and religious training of the child, and physical and mental health care decisions should be subjected to the most rigorous level of judicial scrutiny.

The FRRA will give parents a way to hold the government accountable when it oversteps its proper bounds. This legislation will ensure parents have choices regarding their child's education and health. It will provide parents with the transparency needed to make decisions for their children by ensuring they have access to their children's education and medical records.

This bill aligns with the principles outlined in the *Promise to America's Parents* that is supported by the signatories to this letter. Congress should stand with America's parents and pass the FRRA so that parents can direct their children's upbringing, education, and care.

Parents know and love their children best. Therefore, protecting the rights of parents safeguards children. And when families are strong, the nation will be stronger. We respectfully urge you to enact this legislation so that all federal courts treat parental rights with the respect that they deserve.

Respectfully,

Advocates Protecting Children
Alliance Defending Freedom
American Principles Project
Awake Americans
Californians for Equal Rights Foundation
California Family Council
Capitol Resource Institute
Center for Arizona Policy
Center for Christian Virtue
Child & Parental Rights Campaign

Citizens Defending Freedom
Coalition for Jewish Values
Coalition of Virtue
Colson Center
Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee
Courage is a Habit
Do No Harm Action
Discovery Institute
Eagle Forum
Family Foundation of Virginia
Family Freedom Project
Family Policy Alliance
Family Watch International
Fight for Schools
Florida Family Policy Council
Freedom Works
Frontline Policy Council
Heritage Action for America
Home School Legal Defense Association
Keystone Policy
Minnesota Family Council
Moms for America
Moms for Liberty
My Faith Votes
National Association of Christian Lawmakers
Nevada Family Alliance
North Carolina Values Coalition
No Left Turn in Education
Palmetto Family Council
Parental Rights Florida
Parental Rights Foundation
Parental Rights Iowa
Protect Our Kids
Real Impact
Restore Childhood Fund
Texas Values
Truth in Education