

The Power of Homeschooling Mothers

by John Cobin, Ph.D. for *The Times Examiner*
October 20, 2004

Homeschoolers are becoming one of the most powerful lobbying and political action groups in the country. In particular, homeschool moms have become keenly involved in political matters related to the education of their children. Thanks to the fast dissemination of information on the internet, and the ease of sending email to elected officials, homeschool moms have become a formidable force in the protection of our basic rights. Not only do they, as a group, have the time to stay involved around the clock, they can actually turn political activity into a homeschool function where children observe the political process in action. (I know that there are worthy homeschool dads out there too, but let's face it: the vast majority of the time it is the mother who does the lion's share of the homeschooling and the political activism.)

Just try to restrict the freedom of homeschoolers at the state—no less the national—level. As soon as the restriction is proposed and a bill proposed, word hits the “street” and a rallying cry goes out that leads to an email barrage from thousands of homeschool moms. Vote-seeking politicians are very sensitive to the salvo from such a vibrant and concerned constituency. And they respond, nearly always, by tanking whatever adverse legislation is being proposed. American homeschool mothers even “mailed” the German embassy to the mat when they wrote in mass to protest that government's persecution of a homeschooling family in Germany. The charges against the German family were dropped shortly afterwards.

Of course, we all know how powerful lobbying and defense groups have been in turning the political and legal tide in favor of homeschoolers. Perhaps the most notable organization is the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (<http://www.hslda.org>), along with the occasional support of active think tanks like the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, the Manhattan Institute, the Rutherford Institute, and the Institute for Justice. But nothing can compare to the political clout wielded by those homeschool moms. With nearly two million registered homeschooled children, and maybe that much again if we make an educated guess at estimated the number of unregistered homeschoolers, there are a lot of able-bodied moms enlisting for active duty. And this army gets lots of help from sympathetic conservative and libertarian activists as well, creating a truly impressive force.

What's more, the movement is completely *spontaneous*, an ordered anarchy of free market theorist's lore. These moms have no stated leader. There is no single “executive” mom for the National Education Association to demonize. Like the destroying locusts of Exodus, the homeschool moms are quick to swoop down and devour any foul weed of legislation that sprouts and begins to take root. Most such proposed legislation does not make it out of Committee. And politicians have learned the danger of trying to hide anti-homeschool language in the footnotes of other, generally unrelated bills. Once an infectious or poisoned initiative is discovered, information is urgently disseminated to the throng, causing homeschool moms leap into action. Who can thwart the concerted effort of this swarming beehive?

Just who are these homeschool moms? Many are deeply religious, but not all. What seems to unite them more than anything else is their *character*. They are committed to their families and the quality of their children's education, so much that they are willing to forgo careers and higher family income. Many homeschool moms have advanced degrees in important fields of study, as well as significant work experience gained prior to taking up homeschooling. Moreover, some moms still manage to work in their chosen professions part time, taking up homeschooling as a second job—a daunting task to be sure.

What's more, these women are getting smarter. They are now learning things that they didn't learn in school as they teach their children about government, history, economics, and other subjects. My wife, for instance, is a medical doctor who did not have a strong mathematics background in her own educational formation. Now she is enjoying learning Algebra 2 and Trigonometry as she guides and teaches her teens. She is also garnering new knowledge about economics and public policy. **Warning to the left:** homeschooling is not only undermining what you would have done to the precious minds in the current generation via your public schooling and curriculum meddling, fomenting evils such as Darwinism and revisionist history. It is also undoing much of the damage caused to the current adult generation. Homeschooling is one of the best, and fastest, means of recovery from liberal indoctrination.

Next time you hear about a new bill being proposed that would harm homeschoolers, take a look at what kind of reaction is stirred up. Maybe then you will appreciate even more the sometimes thankless job of the homeschool mom who is often taken for granted. Indeed, even before you probably know that a new threat exists, some group of homeschool mothers is already working hard to derail the leftist effort. The homeschool mom, like the pioneers of old, is ever diligent and courageous to drive back and fight against the hordes of savages that seek to harm her family. And your family benefits from her actions. All I can say is my hat's off to any homeschool mom. But I am especially thankful to those moms who work so hard to guard our liberty, by keeping vigilant watch over the lurking forces of evil that perpetually seek an opportunity to harm us. Those who love liberty owe a debt of gratitude to homeschool mothers.