

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 6, 2003

The Honorable Colin L. Powell  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Powell:

It is our understanding that the U.S. State Department is drafting internal policies and regulations that will affect State Department employees that homeschool their children while abroad. We believe homeschooling is an excellent education method for Foreign Service parents who choose this educational alternative.

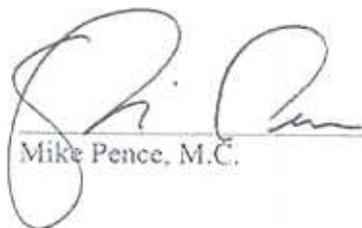
As you develop these new policies, we urge you to grant homeschooled students equitable consideration. Under present State Department practices, many arguably necessary homeschool expenses are disallowed. In such cases, families must cover significant portions of their basic educational expenses out of their own pocket. As parents take responsibility for their children's education, minimal restrictions should be placed upon reimbursing needed education materials and equipment purchased for use in the homeschool setting. Even with a broader interpretation of allowable expenses, homeschooling will still be, by far, the most economical way to ensure a quality education.

Homeschooling is a rapidly growing trend in America—boasting nearly 2 million students today. It is legal and thriving in all 50 states and homeschooled students are reaping the rewards of an excellent education. On average, these students score in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardized achievement tests and represent some of the top performers in national forums such as the national geography and spelling bees each year. More importantly, it can be one more tool for families under the stress of Foreign Service.

Both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House have passed official resolutions recognizing national homeschool week—giving homeschool parents the thumbs up.

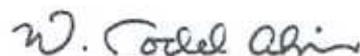
We believe that home education is a tried and true method of education. It has been successfully used in America for centuries and deserves unbiased consideration by all our U.S. agencies. As you develop your policies, please consider how homeschoolers might be treated equitably.

Sincerely,



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Mike Pence, M.C.



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Todd Akin, M.C.

John Hostetler  
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Cc: Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage;  
Undersecretary for Management Grant Green