

The advent of the hatemongering, neo-Nazi home school group in northwest Ohio should sound a warning to state officials who promote private school choice at public expense with scant transparency or accountability.

Public money available to the charter school industry attracted entrepreneurs like the ECOT man, Bill Lager who fleeced the public for two decades. Public money available for universal vouchers, tuition tax credits and education savings accounts will attract a whole new private school industry, part of which will, on the public's dime, indoctrinate youth in a great variety of isms, rituals, cults, folklore, etc.

Universal school choice promoters typically resist transparency and accountability which encourages mischief. The mischief of the neo-Nazi homeschool network is described in the following articles published on Cleveland.com and Gongwer:

Politicians, education officials condemn Ohio couple who run neo-Nazi home school group on Telegram

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By Laura Hancock, cleveland.com

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Politicians and education officials are condemning an Ohio couple accused of running a neo-Nazi home-schooling group on social media with 2,600 followers.

Antifascist researchers known as the Anonymous Comrades Collective first identified the couple, who participated in a neo-Nazi podcast under the names Mr. and Mrs. Saxon, as Logan and Katja Lawrence of Upper Sandusky in Wyandot County. The group's work was the nexus for a story about the couple in Vice News.

Their Telegram channel, started on Oct. 23, 2021, is called Dissident-Homeschool. It features suggested content that is racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic, as well as factually inaccurate. It includes cursive practice sheets with quotes from Adolf Hitler, suggested content about Confederate General Robert E. Lee and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., which included an unfounded conspiracy about Jewish people. The Telegram channel offers a suggested math lesson with a story problem attributing crime to different races.

When the group reached 1,000 subscribers on Dec. 29, 2021, Katja Lawrence, writing as Mrs. Saxon, posted a picture of children giving the Hitler hand salute. "It fills my heart with joy to know there is such a strong base of homeschoolers and homeschool-interested national socialists. Hail Victory."

The Ohio Department of Education said in a prepared statement that it is "actively reviewing compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements," though it's unclear if the review is on the Lawrence family or home schools in general.

Democrats in the Ohio General Assembly say the state's home-schooling laws are relatively weak, which has allowed the couple to teach their children racist content, then share it with others.

"I applaud the efforts of citizen activists and journalists who have brought to light the efforts of neo-Nazi home-schoolers who are promoting a Nazi-infused curriculum for parents," said Sen. Nickie Antonio, a

Lakewood Democrat who is the chamber's minority leader. "This type of hatred has no place in Ohio, nor its education system. I respect the rights of parents to determine their children's education, which can include home schooling. However, we need to carefully examine how we currently regulate home school curriculum."

Tucked into Senate Bill 1, a massive piece of legislation that would overhaul the Ohio Department of Education and gut the Ohio State Board of Education, is a provision that would make it harder for the state to regulate home schools. Under the bill, home school rules would have to be changed via legislation instead of through the state's rulemaking process.

The Home School Defense League Association asked for the provision, said Sen. Andrew Brenner, chairman of the Ohio Senate Primary and Secondary Education Committee, when the bill was new.

"We need to ensure that home schooling is not an opportunity for parents to systemically teach their children hatred," said Sen. Catherine D. Ingram, a Cincinnati Democrat who is the ranking member on the Senate education committee, in a Monday statement.

Neo-Nazi home schooling group run by Ohio couple

This racist and inaccurate suggested content about Martin Luther King was posted on the Telegram channel of Dissident-Homeschool by "Mrs. Saxon," identified by antifacist researchers as Katja Lawrence of Upper Sandusky.

However, Republicans, who have a supermajority in both chambers of the legislature, may be reluctant to further regulate home schools.

"Let's not take freedom away from all for the terrible ideas of a few. I can tell you as a home educating parent from Upper, I've never heard of these people," said Rep. Riordan McClain, a Republican, on Twitter. He was replying to a Twitter post calling for more home school regulations from Rep. Casey Weinstein, a Hudson Democrat who has been the target of anti-Semitic demonstrations since he entered the legislature.

Parents who home school their children agree to provide 900 hours of instruction a year, notify the local superintendent each year of their intention to keep their kids at home and provide an assessment of the student's work.

When notifying the local superintendent, parents complete and sign a form that that requires a brief "outline of intended curriculum for the current year. Such outline is for informational purposes only."

Eric D. Landversicht, superintendent of Upper Sandusky Exempted Village Schools, declined to say whether Logan or Katja Lawrence submitted such forms or paperwork for their children, saying it would violate the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Cleveland.com/The Plain Dealer asked Landversicht for redacted versions of the forms, to protect students' identities, but he declined, saying there was no way to provide the information without identifying them.

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Landversicht provided the publication a copy of a letter he sent to the community. He said the allegations against the Lawrence couple are egregious but that he couldn't share much about their children due to state and federal privacy laws.

"Keeping District students safe continues to be our top priority at Upper Sandusky Schools," he said. "Any parent or student who has a concern about discriminatory conduct within the District's programs or activities should contact the district."

He also added that the district has a safe school tip line.

Stephanie Siddens, interim Ohio superintendent of public instruction, said she was outraged and saddened by the group.

"There is absolutely no place for hate-filled, divisive and hurtful instruction in Ohio's schools, including our state's home-schooling community," she said in a statement. "I emphatically and categorically denounce the racist, antisemitic and fascist ideology and materials being circulated as reported in recent media stories."

Cleveland.com / The Plain Dealer attempted to reach the Lawrences. The voicemail box had not been activated at one number, which went unanswered. The Dissident-Homeschool chat function was disabled. A reporter called two locations for Logan Lawrence's family insurance company, but both said he doesn't work there.

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Racist Home-School Group Sparks Concerns, Calls For Action

State officials expressed outrage Monday after national media outlets reported that an Upper Sandusky couple serve as the leaders of a neo-Nazi home-school network.

"Dissident Homeschool," which was founded in October 2021 and currently has 2,400 members on the messaging app Telegram, promotes white supremacy and discourages parents from letting their children interact with people of other races, according to a Vice [article](#).

The report states that administrators and members of the channel use antisemitic language, racist slurs and quotes by Nazi officials on the public channel and post lesson plans demonizing minorities.

The reports on the network led to calls from Democratic lawmakers to further regulate home schooling.

"This type of hatred has no place in Ohio, nor its education system. I respect the rights of parents to determine their children's education, which can include home schooling," Senate [Minority Leader Nickie Antonio](#) (D-Lakewood) said in a statement. "However, we need to carefully examine how we currently regulate home school curriculum."

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[Rep. Casey Weinstein](#) (D-Hudson) posted a link to the article on Twitter, adding: "I'm gonna go ahead and say we need more regulations around homeschooling here in Ohio."

[Rep. Riordan McClain](#) (R-Upper Sandusky) responded by arguing that the state's entire home-schooling community should not be judged based on reporting on one group.

"Let's not take freedom away from all for the terrible ideas of a few. I can tell you as a home educating parent from Upper, I've never heard of these people," he wrote.

House [Minority Leader Allison Russo](#) (D-Upper Arlington) wrote that many parents do a good job teaching their children.

"But, Ohio's current law is hugely problematic when it allows bad actors like this to continue," she wrote.

[State Board of Education](#) Track member Teresa Fedor called on her colleagues in state government to condemn the group and work to ensure no public funding is used to develop its curriculum.

"Silence regarding hate, is complicity for hate," she said in a statement. "The recent report that a group of homeschooling Ohio parents who told a recent Nazi podcast that they were creating a curriculum for 'Nazi-approved homeschool material' should alarm all Ohioans."

Via Gongwer 1.31.23