Proponent Testimony
For the Senate Commerce Committee and the
House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee
Joint Meeting
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Executive Director of the Kansas State High School Activities Association

Chair Alley, Chair Tarwater, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in favor of the Kansas Sports Authority Bill on behalf of the member schools of the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA).

The KSHSAA is a private not-for-profit association of 743 accredited member public and private schools (349 high schools, 394 middle/junior high schools). The purpose of the KSHSAA is to coordinate, develop, oversee, and support interscholastic activities, festivals, clinics and contests among member schools.

The KSHSAA conducted our first championship in 1910, were established in 1937 and incorporated in 1956. KSHSAA offers culminating activities in 33 activities with state championships in 11 boys and girls sports and ten additional championships/festivals in music activities, debate, speech and drama, and scholars bowl. Additionally, the KSHSAA administers the student leadership development programs of Student Council and the Kansas Association of Youth. The KSHSAA prioritizes and seeks to elevate academic achievement while promoting the standards of good sportsmanship and the growth of good citizenship among students and spectators.

KSHSAA member schools are from across Kansas with all 105 counties represented. The governing board is comprised of 75 stakeholders representing Governor Appointees (4), State Board of Education (2), Local Boards of Education (8), Middle Schools (6), High Schools Leagues/Conferences (50), and Advisory Groups (5). A subset of 12 serve as the Executive Board, and a separate 8-member Appeal Board helps to ensure compliance and appropriate decision making. The association has a staff of 24 full-time employees with the Association office in west Topeka.

The Sports Authority Bill (HB 2793) is a historic opportunity to support the mission of the KSHSAA by positively impacting the students and the school communities we serve.

As the KSHSAA seeks to provide excellent facilities that will enhance culminating events in all activities, we believe a world class NFL stadium in Kansas can be used, among other purposes, to stage Kansas High School State championship games and tournaments.

While every youngster dreams of being the next Patrick Mahomes or Travis Kelce, the reality is only the elite of the elite make it to “the league” as we know 95% of our student athletes have

their terminal athletic experience at the high school level. But, as they realize they may not go pro, a very realistic dream is to play for a championship in the new Kansas City Chiefs stadium in Kansas. As a new stadium is a huge win for the Chiefs, it is also a chance to connect every school community to the Chiefs as the goal of every high school team is play in that championship game.

The Chiefs have been proactive in working with the KSHSAA to establish a framework where this might occur and their enthusiasm and professionalism make them tremendous partners going forward. By providing high school athletes with access to state-of-the-art facilities, a new stadium would enhance the competitive experience, further motivate our students while improving performance levels.

A new stadium can serve as a hub for broad-based public engagement with annual events that foster local pride, spirit and a sense of community. But it can also serve to support education-based activities and positively impact students and schools across the great state of Kansas.

Additionally, a prominent NFL venue would help to attract sponsors and partners interested in supporting youth sports, increasing resources available to the KSHSAA and its member schools.

We believe these benefits would extend well beyond tackle football and could also encompass, at a minimum, the potential addition of Flag Football to our roster of sports—something our member schools will be voting on later this spring.

In sum, this legislation and the construction it enables will be an unprecedented boon to Kansas students and help to create memories and community bonds which will enrich the educational experience to be celebrated throughout the lifetime of Kansas students and school communities.

On behalf of the 743 member schools and our governing Board of Directors, I strongly encourage your support of the Sports Authority Bill. Thank you, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions in this regard.