

January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Testimony before the House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Re: House Bill 2030

John Eck, parent and taxpayer

Chairperson Williams and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity today to speak on behalf of House Bill 2030.

I am also speaking on behalf of my daughter, Ella, and on behalf of many other part-time public-school students, and nonpublic school students.

Last semester, Ella was attending a public school full-time.

However, for many reasons, I decided at semester break to move her to part-time status.

This was not a quick or reactionary decision.

My wife and I have spent many hours determining what is best for our child.

Our goal is to raise a well-rounded, well-educated, well-behaved, and emotionally stable student athlete.

Our academic standards are **higher** than the public-school standards.

Our behavioral and ethical standards are **higher** than public-school standards.

We know we can provide **more accountability** and **better results** for Ella and do so **more efficiently** than the public school system can.

The data regarding homeschool proficiency and stability rates supports this assertion.

As a part-time student at a public school, we have been told that Ella is not eligible to participate in non-accredited or private school sports organizations, OR public-school athletics.

For clarity, **Ella is ineligible for all organized sports**, public or home-school, because of her part-time status, according to KSHSAA.

The current law allows for part-time students, yet these students are being denied a right given to homeschool students and public-school students. This is discriminatory.

HB2030 rightly opens these sports leagues and puts the determination back with the taxpaying parents, where it belongs.

Parents of homeschool and part-time students that live in the district and pay taxes in the district have earned that right.

Next, I would like to refute some of the arguments made against HB 2030, particularly from KSHSAA's testimony against HB 2511 last year. I assume the arguments will be the same this year.

**Argument #1:** "Parents of these students will be justifiably concerned for the inherent unfairness since their students earn eligibility for school activities by being accountable to specific and measurable academic standards in schools which are accredited by the KSDE. House Bill 2511 imposes eligibility for students choosing home school without regard to those students being accountable to the same standards."

**Rebuttal:**

First of all, I have reviewed all testimonies against HB 2511, and the opponents were almost all bureaucrats and school administrators, apart from one opponent who refers to himself only as a "private citizen." This does not appear to be a concern for parents, contrary to the statement from KSHSAA. (This year's testimony's may be different)

Second, public school proficiency rates in math and reading have been in a free-fall for quite some time. However, Non-accredited private school students perform much better on college entrance exams than public school students. Students like Ella also score significantly higher on ACT and SAT tests and have higher college graduation rates. Non-accredited students also report better mental health, lower suicide rates, lower drug abuse rates, and lower incarceration rates. Therefore, I find it ridiculous to deny eligibility for academic reasons or for lack of oversight. For one, this type of language implies that I, and other parents, cannot be trusted or truthful in the academic well-being of our own children. Second, I would argue that public schools should look in the mirror when discussing academic accountability, rather than concern themselves with discrediting the higher achievements of children schooled outside their institutions.

**Argument #2:** "To grant automatic eligibility to home school children to play on another school's team where they have no standing or connection, fundamentally changes the nature of school activity groups and teams as extensions of the sponsoring school."

**Rebuttal:** This argument is insulting to me as a taxpayer and a life-long resident our school district. Our family does have a standing and connection to this school. I attended myself many years ago and have been paying taxes ever since, taxes that support the district. However, after I pay those taxes, I am now informed that I have no standing or connection. **I am only asking to use a small portion of the services I pay for.**

Additionally, Ella is an excellent student and an excellent athlete. She is involved. For example, she participates in FFA (Future Farmers of America). Oddly enough, no one cares about "oversight" in this interscholastic activity, and Ella is currently not being denied this opportunity despite her part-time status.

Finally, This bill does not bring in students from out of district. These students live in the community and have many relational as well as financial connections to it. Therefore, this bill will not change the nature of school teams as alleged.

**Argument #3:** "Parents elect homeschool by choice. Like all choices that decision provides certain opportunities and eliminates others."

**Rebuttal:** This is an argument from precedent, a logical fallacy (Argumentum Ad Traditionem, Argumentum Ad Antiquitatem) and is irrelevant. This is only true because of the way things were or are. This is not an argument from reason, it merely states the current state of affairs. Several other testimonies used this fallacy as well so I thought it would be good to point it out, but I won't waste our time addressing it further.

In summary, many institutions that purport to put the needs of the students first are trying to deny rights to those same students, in order to protect the institutions.

These same institutions do not trust the parents to make decisions for and to educate their own children, despite the results showing who is having success and who is failing, and who is doing it at a fraction of the cost.

Yet, I can see, and my hope is that you do as well, that HB2030 benefits many students and harms none.

HB 2030 allows parents to determine what is best for their children's short- and long-term education and overall wellness.

House Bill 2030 ensures that the needs and best interests of the students will truly be the priority.

House Bill 2030 ensures that taxpaying parents and their children have the ability and the freedom to make decisions that are best for their children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.