

To whom it may concern:

Thank you for hearing HB2103. I am a mother of three girls who are very active in 4-H. Our girls started 4-H at the age of 7. I could make a long list of benefits of the program, but I will just touch of a few.

Our oldest daughter was very reserved and shy until she joined 4-H. At 7, she began speaking at club meetings to present the flag salute, and as she got older, we encouraged her to give project talks. She discovered that speaking about topics she was passionate about was both rewarding and empowering. Now, at 16, you would never guess she was once shy. Being involved in an organization that supported her love for agriculture and livestock helped her come out of her shell. Today, she uses the public speaking skills she developed in 4-H to compete in high school forensics, and she's now considering a degree in agricultural business and communications.

Our school didn't have an FFA program until December 2024, so the 4-H program has been an invaluable way to teach life and career skills, while also helping our daughters build confidence and forge relationships within the agriculture industry. Through 4-H, they've had the opportunity to show livestock, take on leadership roles such as CIA, Ambassadors, and club officer. Showing livestock has fueled their passion for agriculture and taught them important skills like animal husbandry, work ethic, time management, and networking with both peers and professionals. The leadership roles have helped them grow in areas like public speaking, agricultural advocacy, communication (both written and verbal), and boosted their confidence.

While some 4-H activities require time away from school, I firmly believe the benefits far outweigh the minimal time lost. As a family, we hold our girls to a high academic standard, requiring them to maintain a strong GPA to participate in extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, our children have faced some negativity surrounding the absences caused by their involvement in 4-H, likely due to some educators being unfamiliar with the program's benefits and events. My hope is that with the passing of HB2103, school boards will adopt the bill, and that those involved in 4-H and FFA will seize the opportunity to advocate for the program. By communicating its importance and benefits to school boards and educators, we can build support for opportunities that help develop well-rounded and productive students.

The benefits of 4-H and FFA participation starts at a young age and stays with them through high school and continues to help them grow as adults. I ask that you pass this bill with support for students that find their passion through agricultural activities. Thank you for your time and please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,

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