

**Melody McCurry**

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**HB 2103 – School Excused Absence Bill for FFA and 4-H Students**

**Proponent**

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**Dear Representative Estes and Members of the House Education Committee,**

Thank you, Chairwoman and Committee, for your time and consideration. My name is Melody McCurry, and I am proud to represent the parents of FFA and 4-H students across Kansas. As the mother of three children deeply involved in these programs, I have seen firsthand the life-changing impact they have on young people. That is why I am writing today to express my unwavering support for House Bill 2103.

Education does not only happen within the four walls of a classroom. Some of the most valuable lessons—ones that shape character, instill responsibility, and build future leaders—happen in barns before sunrise, in fields under the afternoon sun, and in the late hours of the night, finishing a project that demands perseverance. FFA and 4-H students don't just learn about agriculture; they live it. These students wake up early to feed animals, monitor their health, prepare for competitions, and dedicate countless hours to ensuring they see their projects through to completion. They learn the value of commitment, hard work, and accountability—lessons that stay with them for a lifetime, regardless of the career path they choose.

The numbers speak for themselves. Research shows that compared to their peers, 4-H and FFA members are:

- **2.3 times more likely** to be physically active,
- **Nearly twice as likely** to pursue higher education, and
- **3.4 times more likely** to give back to their communities.

But beyond the statistics, these programs create confident, capable, and compassionate young adults. They develop leadership skills, public speaking abilities, and a deep appreciation for service. They are our future veterinarians, scientists, business owners, and policymakers. And yet, too often, they face barriers when missing school for competitions, conferences, and events that are as educational—if not more so—than what they experience in a classroom.

House Bill 2103 is not about special treatment; it is about recognizing the real and tangible value of hands-on education. It ensures that students engaged in 4-H and FFA are not penalized for investing in their future. It acknowledges that education comes in many forms and that leadership, responsibility, and work ethic are just as important as test scores.

I urge you to stand with the thousands of students and families who dedicate their time, energy, and passion to these programs. Support House Bill 2103 and help us continue to build a generation of young leaders who will shape the future of Kansas and beyond.

Thank you for your time, your dedication, and your belief in the power of hands-on education.

**Sincerely,  
Melody McCurry**