

From: [Hoyt, Priscilla](#)
To: [House Education](#)
Subject: HB2103
Date: Saturday, February 1, 2025 11:16:41 AM

My name is Priscilla Hoyt, I am a school board member in Pretty Prairie, KS. I am writing today in support of the following change in your House Bill:

(2) Each board of education shall adopt rules for determination of valid excuse for absence from school and for determination of what shall constitute constitutes a "significant part of a school day" for the purpose of this section. **Participation in an agricultural science activity, including, but not limited to, scheduled FFA events and 4-H programs that are part of organized competitions or events, shall be a valid excuse for absence from school.**

While I am a school board member, I am also a mom of 3 and my husband and I own a small ranching operation here in Kansas. My Children have participated in 4H from the earliest of age and as they reach High School they have participated in our FFA program.

My oldest child (our son) who is a senior now was a very quiet boy. We started taking him to livestock judging competitions when he was in 1st grade. Why would we pull a 1st grader out of school? You might ask, well let me tell you. My son LOVES his animals, the farm and outside. School was not his thing. Our agreement with him was that he had to go to the teacher and get his homework for the day he would miss. He had to have all of his work completed that night before the competition the next day or he would have to go to school instead of the competition. How did this benefit him? He was a shy child that the teacher never heard speak unless they would take the time to talk about cows with him. Now, he had to go up to the teacher and initiate a conversation and explain what he would be doing the next day. He started forming relationships with his teachers because they now took an invested interest in his interest. At the competition, he would have to give reasons to a perfect stranger. He learned how to take notes, memorize his speech and talk to someone about his placings. For a mom of a shy child that is HUGE success for the man he will grow into! What we felt we taught him with this was that we see your love and passion for animals and the outdoors and we want to help you grow in these areas but we also need you to know that school work is important. When he reached High School he put a lot of thought into playing sports and showing cattle. He made the decision that showing cattle was his sport and he would focus on that because if he tried to do both things then one "sport" would always get shorted. While his "sport" is not recognized by the school as anything, it is creating his path into adulthood and driving his decisions in the direction of college and his field of study.

In our State right now there is a huge push to help children find "their thing", help them carve out their career path and help their studies to reflect their desires along with a new graduation requirement that these kids do community service. I do not know a 4H kid or FFA kid that does not work hard, serve their community well and strive for big changes! Why would we hinder this? By allowing these kids to participate in 4H and FFA activities without penalizing them for doing so we are just continuing to create a stronger Kansas! We are a State largely made up of Agriculture, we want our kids to stay here or come back here to raise their kids then we need to support them now! We need to say that we see what you are doing is valid and important and worthy!

Did you know that in our district I have actually had kids tell me that they are not doing FFA next year because it's too much work and not enough fun! Let that sink in! FFA and 4H is a lot of work for these kids! They do not get recognized by the schools for their accomplishments like the sports teams do but these kids are working very hard every single day to perfect their craft that will absolutely shape their future and the future of Kansas! Help support our kids all across the State and let them "compete" without penalty just like we do for all of the sports competitions.

I am thankful that we are in a district with an administration that is willing to allow the absences for these events to be excused but very few kids in our state are fortunate like that. I want to thank you in advance for your consideration of this change. I am certain a change like this will have an impact across the state not only for FFA members, 4H members but also for the Junior High and High School Rodeo kids!

Priscilla Hoyt
Board Member @ USD #311