

Good afternoon. My name is Keara Richardson. My husband and I have homeschooled our children in Wallace County for 14 years. I have called Wallace County, Kansas “home” my entire life. I, myself, am a graduate of Wallace County High School and had the pleasure of competing as a student-athlete in 3 sports for all four years of high school. In 2023, with the passage of SB 113, our homeschooled children were able to play sports for our local public school, USD 241. Homeschooling in a rural community often means traveling distances of 3-5 hours to find opportunities to compete, so the opportunity to compete in our hometown for the first time was very much welcomed in our home, though we were aware that the decision was not welcomed by all. Four of our children began to wear Wildcat uniforms and represent Wallace County Schools; having the same responsibilities as the enrolled students in following the district’s rules and policies: communicating absences with staff, following cell phone usage rules, dress codes, codes of conduct, etc.

My daughter has explained in her testimony, the discrimination non-public school students were subjected to at USD 241, so I would like to use my time to further advocate for why this law is necessary. It has been suggested that if the KSHSAA would have been aware of this situation, they could have resolved the issue. However, KSHSAA would have no jurisdiction over these areas. The district was careful to exclude only in the areas in which they have governance: in this case, it was lettering and honors ceremonies, which are under the purview of the district. In addition, I confirmed that Mr. Faflick, Executive Director of KSHSAA, did have a conversation with district officials. I wasn’t able to make

connection with Mr. Faflick personally, but I would assume that since in his neutral testimony of this bill in the Senate he stated that this kind of discrimination would be out of step of KSHSAA's "philosophy and intent" that he might have communicated that to the district. Even after a conversation with KSHSAA and with a potential federal lawsuit hanging in the balance, two of the six board members still voted to continue the discriminatory policies, one member stating that there was no problem at all with these policies, because they complied with the law. I would defer to Mr. Faflick on what was communicated to the district, but if there was a clarification of the activities association's "philosophy and intent" and a reminder that the association's training advised that once the uniform went on, there would be no distinction between athletes, that advice was insufficient to correct some of the board members' discriminatory attitudes. Local governance is good, but it should be standardly agreed upon that school boards should not be allowed to discriminate simply because they share a district address and can secure enough votes.

I ask for your support of SB 114, which I believe is necessary to ensure that the "spirit of the law" of SB 113 is followed, and that ALL district students, regardless of enrollment status, can be free to participate in the activities sanctioned by the KSHSAA. Thank you for your time.