

My husband (who unfortunately couldn't be here today) and I would like to thank Representative Highland and honored committee members for allowing me to speak today. We also want to thank my aunt, Pat Pettey, a senator from the 6th district for keeping us updated on the status of SB 60. My name is Julie Davis. My husband, Bryan, and I live in Winfield, KS, and have nine children some of whom I've brought with me today.

Primarily, our children have been homeschooled; however, they have taken some classes in the Winfield Public Schools. For example, our oldest daughter, Glynne, enjoyed participating in the Honor Choir for two years. She has continued her education and will receive her associates degree in business this spring. In addition, Ally, our second daughter, studied art (also at Winfield High) for 4 years with an exceptional art instructor. She is now an art major in college. Our son, Landon, who enjoys sports, is currently taking a daily P.E. class at the middle school.

Since this bill SB 60 concerns homeschooling in relation to the participation in extracurricular activities, I want to share background information about our son, Landon. When he was a 5th grader, he begged us to sign him up for Winfield Youth Football. He absolutely loved it. We all did. Our whole family donned bright blue Viking gear and cheered for Landon and his fellow teammates. The season ended and he couldn't wait for the 6th grade season to start. Again, he was excited to play football and would tell me it was - "the best sport ever!" Landon was really disappointed when he realized that he was not going to be able to play football in the 7th grade unless he enrolled in at least 5 classes at the Winfield Middle School. Landon liked being home schooled and saw the value in his home schooling experience. It was a problem. That season he volunteered to be an assistant on his little brother's 3rd grade team, but he really missed competing. As parents, we decided to make a more concentrated effort to see if Landon could play football and still be home schooled.

Eventually, we were told our son could play football if we enrolled him in a virtual school and he took one class on Winfield's campus. Since Winfield doesn't have a virtual school, we signed him up with Maize Virtual Preparatory School. Still there was some confusion among the school administrators whether he could legally play. Finally after several phone calls and discussions with our local school board, it was unanimously decided that any student enrolled in virtual school, could participate in district sports as well as other extracurricular activities. As a result, Landon got to play football his 8th grade year. He was thrilled. Besides the camaraderie with his teammates, football reinforced how important it is to be accountable, how to respect those in a position of authority, how to follow directions, and how to get along with all types of people. For many students, participation in team sports is invaluable.

Since we have chosen to homeschool, you may ask, "What right do we have to expect that our kids can participate in district activities?" To answer that question, we pay taxes to support our school district. However, in addition to that fact, we want to be

an active part of the community. For years, my husband's business has sponsored various school activities and helped support the Winfield Viking Booster Club. We also recognize the importance of our kids being involved in our community.

Landon would love to play football in high school, but there is an issue with enrolling him in virtual school since it is primarily internet based. Where we live, our internet is incredibly slow which means Landon has to sit and wait for lessons to load, buffer and re-buffer, or he has to stop and do something else and return to the computer later. Instead of relying on the internet for his lessons, I prefer hands-on experiences combined with textbooks, workbooks, and discussions to provide him with a thorough education. For these reasons and others, I am in favor of students and parents having a choice in their method of education.

*National test scores consistently indicate that homeschoolers are performing well academically; therefore, I am not here to advocate that students participate in sports without engaging in rigorous academic curriculum. In fact, all of the home schooling families we know, feel the exact same way.

In conclusion, I am here to ask you to support SB 60 so that all children in our state be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities regardless of whether a student attends school in that district full time. In my opinion, the adoption of this bill would move education in a positive direction for all children in our state.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today. My husband and I are willing to answer any questions or concerns you may have. I have included our contact information on the testimony we have submitted.

Contact Information:

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*The most comprehensive academic homeschool study ever completed -- the *Progress Report of 2009: Homeschool Academic Achievement and Demographics* released by the [National Home Education Research Institute](#) -- concluded that homeschooled students score an average of 34 to 39 percentile points higher than their peers on standardized achievement tests.