

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 17

Bill #: SubSB60

Position: Opposition

Form: Written

From: William Burton

Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak before you concerning SubSB60. Please know that I am not anti-homeschooling with my testimony. In my twenty-one years as a professional educator I have seen students who are products of both great and not so good homeschool experiences. Likewise, I have seen students who are both great and not so good products of public and private school experiences. Ultimately, homeschooling of ones children is a conscience decision made by those families for a multitude of reasons.

As an athletic/activities director for ten years, I oppose Bill SubSB60 for the following reasons.

1. ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY:

I realize that according to Bill SubSB60 students would still have to be members of registered/accredited homeschools with the Kansas Department of Education.

However, students who are members of accredited public or private schools meet academic requirements that are readily traceable. These requirements are overseen by administration within those schools. Some districts even have more stringent standards than those mandated by the Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA).

The ability to track homeschool students in an objective and comparable fashion would be difficult if not impossible.

2. LOOPHOLES:

It is my belief that the passing of Bill SubSB60 will open the door to abuses of "red shirt" type activities.

For example, Sydney is an 8th grade student who has athletic ability but has yet to physically mature in a comparable manner to her peers. She has an April birthday which makes her young for her class (i.e. she would turn 18 the last semester of her senior year). He parents choose to homeschool Sydney during her 8th grade year (or sooner) along with the next year with the intent of delaying her entrance into high school and the start of her 8 semesters of competition eligibility.

These are the doors that could be opened.

3. FUNDING:

I understand that the families of homeschool students pay taxes that go toward public education. However, if that student is not enrolled at a public school, the district in which they live does not receive any of that funding.

My understanding of SubSB60 is that if passed, home districts would have to accept homeschool students wishing to participate in extra-curricular athletic/activities offered and this participation would not be funded. There are no provisions where the homeschool student would bring their tax dollars with them.

We know that state revenues are down. We know cuts are already being made to K-12 public education. What sense does it make to mandate a Bill that is unfunded?

A person might say, well we will put a weighting in that schools can apply for if a homeschool student were to seek participation in their home district. We have already been told that school finance is too complicated, yet we would add this layer? Also, what would this look like? There seem to be too many unanswered questions within this Bill that one is left to assume will be taken care of.

4. EXTENSIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT:

For whatever reasoning, families of homeschool students have chosen that public or private educational institutions are not right for their child.

Public and private school extra-curricular athletics/activities are an extension of the school to which they are tied. There is an aspect of participation that means you are representing the school for which you compete. Homeschool students would not have that connection because of choices they have made not to be part of the academic setting.