

Proponent Testimony of SB #13

For the Senate Education Committee

January 23, 2023

Richard Epp

Owner: Open Spaces Sports, Inc.

Chair Bomgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill #13 on behalf of the fine viewers who watch our live streaming of Kansas High School sports on [www.openspacesports.com](http://www.openspacesports.com).

I am Richard Epp, owner of Open Spaces Sports, Inc., a live-streaming company in Colby, KS. I have worked in the radio and television industry for over 50 years, including sports play-by-play for the University of Illinois, side-line reports for the K-State Network, KLOE radio and TV Sports as Sports Director in Goodland, Ks., KLBV -TV, Colby, KS. We started Open Spaces Sports in 2009 to provide live streaming, with play-by-play of high school and college sports.

Local businesses sponsor the games, allowing them to promote their companies to a larger audience while enabling grandparents, brothers, sisters, other relatives, and former players worldwide to watch when they cannot be there in person, free of charge. Coaches use our streaming service as a scouting and recruiting tool. The players use it to go back into the archives to see what they need to do to improve their skills, and they can get a DVD of all games to remember their sports career and to use as a recruiting tool to further their athletic endeavors.

An exclusive contract that KSHSAA has in place prohibits us from covering some of the teams we have covered all year long regarding the post-season and some regular-season events. One of the most significant events we have been unable to cover on championship weekends has been the state volleyball, basketball, and wrestling tournaments, specifically Class 321A and Class 4A. We believe competition is valuable to students as well as businesses. It is the American way, free enterprise. It allows students to work hard for their goals and for owners of companies to provide for their families. We hold firm to the fact that exclusivity is not competition. How can one compete if they aren't allowed to?

We love providing this service to our small communities, who often don't receive the services larger communities do. We love giving them the ability to watch their children or grandchildren participate. Our sole purpose is to provide a quality service to our communities, to give our student-athletes the coverage we feel they deserve. Live video streaming, it's what we do.

I'm here today to support Senate Bill #13, to allow companies across Kansas to cover regular season and post-season along with NFHS, not excluding anyone. I ask you to please support our students and their families. As taxpayers and lovers of our great state, we at Open Spaces Sports appreciate all you do for Kansas. Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill.

Rich Epp

Owner of Open Spaces Sports

Colby, Ks.