

Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Honorable Chairman and Committee members. My name is Mike Skidmore from Ottawa, Ks where I live and work in a local bank and volunteer on several local community boards.

You may ask “How did I get involved in this bill?” I have known Mr. Brockus to be a valued and trusted friend for 50 years. I have shared his life’s events and his faith. Learning about this issue, I fully support the efforts to pursue a change. As I ponder the significant benefits of this bill, I wonder how many parents throughout this great State of ours even know about it. Yet it’s for those parents and their children that will be the benefactors of its passage. We may be a silent majority, but if parents knew the advantages provided in these proposed changes, I’m certain they would voice their support as I am today.

This fair minded proposed bill will include both Democrats and Republicans selecting two members for the Executive Board of the KSHSAA. The bi-partisan input was intentional to show our motives as “parent driven” and not affected by party affiliation. When is it ever wrong to promote more non-educator parental involvement at any level of our educational system? That’s what makes our current school boards and site council work.

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to serve on various boards from the Ottawa Chamber, the Ottawa University President’s Council, Habitat for Humanity and Franklin County Development Council, and local site councils. In all of these beneficial organizations, we cherished the diversity of its membership. Each person’s unique background and perspective proved beneficial to the discussion and decisions that were carefully weighed and enacted. The 10 member KSHSAA Executive Board, which is the governing authority of the KSHSAA member schools, consists of virtually all school administrators.

The Executive Director of the Association, a former coach and teacher, has stated that school administrators are parents too. And while that may be true, there is potential for administrator’s decisions to be biased by the culture in which they work. Those issues do not exist for non-educator parents, who are not subject to the possible internal politics, peer pressure and desirable career opportunities within the Association. To a school administrator, membership on the Executive Board can be a “resume builder” should they pursue a KSHSAA staff opening, or other career advancement opportunities.

A self governing culture by its very nature promotes the “status quo”, by making it more difficult for those who think differently to get into position to consider change. Modifying the Association Executive board to provide formal citizen representation, will better reflect the interests of all stakeholders (parents, school administrators, and especially the students). These decisions will have more

credibility with the schools and the public because all the stakeholders will have been formally represented in the decisions.

By modifying the governing structure of the Association to include some parents, controversial issues should be more easily resolved without parents frequently seeking help from the legislature on various issues.

If private citizens are qualified to govern the local school districts, then private citizens are qualified to be a part of the governance of the KSHSAA. There is a large and talented pool of citizens with degrees in recreation working at commissions all across the state, which are overseen by Board members that volunteer their services for no personal gain or compensation. They make and enforce rules governing thousands to millions of tax dollars. This could be fertile ground for finding many good candidates to serve on the expanded Boards.

Please consider the merits of this bill and not solely at the authorship. Students now and from the future will applaud your foresight by voting in favor of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Skidmore