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Testimony in opposition of HB 2197

Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee this morning. My name is Stacey Yurkovich. I am currently in my 21<sup>st</sup> year as a building administrator in a member school of the Kansas State High School Activities Association. This morning I am here in my capacity as the Junior High/Middle School representative from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District serving on the Kansas State High School Activities Association Board of Directors. Previously I served three two year terms on the Board of Directors, and one 3 year term on the Executive Board. I am speaking in opposition to the proposed House Bill 2197.

To begin I would like to share with you the mission statement for the Kansas High School Activities Association.

*The Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHSAA) serves students by providing leadership for the administration of education based interscholastic activities.*

The mission is supported and fulfilled based upon these beliefs. We believe:

- Member schools are the Kansas State High School Activities Association.
- KSHSAA is a student-centered organization.
- KSHSAA is the recognized state authority on interscholastic activity programs.
- Our Association is strengthened by equity and diversity.
- Each school choosing membership in the KSHSAA is equally important and has a direct voice in governing the organization.
- KSHSAA is best governed by representatives of the member schools and its affiliated organizations.
- Each KSHSAA sponsored activity is equally important.
- Student participation in interscholastic activity programs and competitions is a privilege.
- Participation in interscholastic programs promotes student academic achievement.
- Interscholastic activity programs promote positive school/community relations.
- Safety, quality, and fairness in interscholastic activity programs are essential.
- Fiscal responsibility by the KSHSAA benefits member schools.
- Participation in interscholastic programs promotes good citizenship, improves life skills, and builds character.
- Honesty, integrity and sportsmanship are the fundamentals upon which all interscholastic programs are built.
- All professionals that are in contact with students should be knowledgeable and properly trained.

Those promoting HB 2197 have done so on the premise that it will provide more diversity in the backgrounds of those involved, increase the credibility of all stakeholders, and limit the internal politics and peer pressure. They have failed to recognize the KSHSAA structure for representation already in existence. As stated in the KSHSAA belief statements, member schools *are* the KSHSAA. Already included in the By-Laws are requirements to provide for diverse representation on the Board of Directors and the Executive Board. School size, gender, ethnicity, leagues, activities and athletics, local board members, and state board members are all represented. In addition, at-large members are elected to fill any criterion not satisfied by an elected individual. Requiring the addition of non-educator members duplicates the representation, increasing the size of the boards, and making the process of administering activities and athletics more cumbersome. If the issue is that parents are not formally identified as a required represented group, consideration should be given to the number of board members who are parents, and who have had or currently have children involved in interscholastic activities and athletics. What could be more credible than a parent who is also an educator and who has committed to a career working with and supporting the youth of Kansas? Regarding internal politics and peer pressure within the association, I know not of what they speak. However, it would seem that placing the responsibility of naming Executive Board members on the leadership of the Senate and House could certainly create internal political concerns.

The impact this bill would have on the efficient management of league business, activities and athletics, and association business is an additional concern. Meeting efficiency would be impacted by adding non-educator members to leagues and boards. Discussions and decisions made by leagues require a knowledge-base of school structures and systems. The focus of these decisions is to determine what is best for student athletes and activity participants. Please note the emphasis on students. Discussions and decisions are broad in nature and must take into account, what is best for all students, loss of instructional time, common core standards, and state mandated assessments. These considerations are second-nature to educators. Additional time would be required to teach non-educator members how students and schools are impacted by activities and athletics on a daily basis, thus diminishing the efficient use of meeting time.

Fiscal responsibilities and efficiencies of the association are also impacted by this bill. Although no additional funding would be required from the state, the association would be held accountable for any additional costs associated with the increased membership. KSHSAA Board of Director members travel from locations all across the state twice each school year to meet, and Executive Board members travel six times a year. Expenses related to travel, accommodations, and meals are covered by the association. An increase in the number of board members would increase costs to the Association. These increased costs would impact member schools that fund association business. With the state of school finance in Kansas, schools can ill afford additional expenses at this time.

The design of the governmental structure in the United States is one based on choosing the most qualified representatives, those who have the knowledge and experience, to make decisions for those they represent. If the issue is that parents are under-represented in the decisions made by the KSHSAA, or if member schools have failed to listen or bring forward those interests, then shame on us. We need to, and should, find a way to improve that relationship. If however, the issue is that KSHSAA or member schools have failed to say "yes" to a special interest and this bill is a way to circumvent an organization that has been in existence for 76 years with the purpose to *serve students by providing leadership for the administration of education based interscholastic activities*, then shame on all of us for giving it our time and attention.

I again state my opposition to HB 2197 on the basis that it will be detrimental to both current and future Kansas students involved in interscholastic activities and athletics. This bill would make the administration of these programs more cumbersome and inefficient, by promoting individual interests rather than serving students.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to present this morning.