

HB 2197 Kansas High Schools Activities Association

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on House Bill 2197.

My name is David Dennis. I served on the Kansas State Board of Education from January 2009 to January 2013 the last two years as the Chairman. I also served on the Board of Directors for the National Association of State Boards of Education and on the Board of Directors and the Executive Board for the Kansas State High School Activities Association as the State Board representative. I am also privileged to have the opportunity to be the announcer for extracurricular high school events including football, basketball, wrestling and swimming for a local school district.

Kansas has a proud history of local control of their school districts. The elected board members from each of our school districts represent and are held accountable by the parents, businesses, communities, teachers and students within their districts. In addition, our elected board members are also parents, business owners, and active members of the communities that elect them. Our local school board members do represent the voice of the public they serve. Eight local board of education members and two Kansas State Board of Education members hold positions on the KSHSAA Board of Directors, as direct and accountable representatives of the public who elect them. These board members have diverse backgrounds. They make critical decisions every day that are open to scrutiny and feedback by the public. They provide accountability and transparency.

Let's look a little closer at the composition of the Kansas State High School Activities Association Board of Directors. During a survey of the members in April 2011 with 65 members present, representing licensed professional educators and board members were the parents of 178 children and 65 grandchildren. I know as a parent and grandparent myself that I considered what was in the best interest of the children in our state when making my decisions.

Mandating another layer of bureaucracy to each of the leagues and adding more members to the KSHSAA boards is a solution looking for a problem that does not exist. We have parents involved in our schools every day and at policy making levels in our local and state boards. Those parents come from diverse backgrounds. They have the credibility of oversight by the citizens within our communities. They are parents and receive feedback from other parents. They provide accountability and transparency. I do not support House Bill 2197 and urge you reject the idea that any licensed educator or board member would act in the self-interest of KSHSAA and to the detriment of our students. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today.

David T. Dennis
Colonel, United States Air Force (Retired)
615 N. Rainbow Lake Rd.
Wichita, KS 67235
Cell: 316-650-0152
e-mail: dtdennis@swbell.net