

March 14, 2013

House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Testimony in Opposition to House Bill #2197

Chairman Siegfried and members of the committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in opposition of HB 2197. My name is Rusty Newman, I am the Director of Student Services and Athletics for the Shawnee Mission School District. I have been involved in education and athletics for the past 41 years. During my tenure I have had the opportunity to be involved in both our state and national organizations including two terms on the KSHSAA board of directors.

The Shawnee Mission School District is a member of the Sunflower league. Our league consisting of 12 schools from four different school districts has a very effective governing process that is comprised of both building principals and building Athletic directors. The sunflower league currently has 4 representatives on the KSHSAA board of directors.

In the Shawnee Mission School district we provide our patrons numerous opportunities to share with our principals any concerns that would include issues involving the KSHSAA. These opportunities can be in the form of meetings such as Booster club, pta, site council, board of education, sport specific meetings and of course an open door policy in which a parent may request a meeting. Principals in turn address these concerns during our league meetings and if appropriate are forward to the board of directors. This is a very effective, efficient and representative process that has served us well.

During my 41 years in education I have seen many changes. I believe in most instances change is good and necessary. The KSHSAA has been involved in constant change during my tenure always in an attempt to improve the process of governing our school activities. The current boards of directors are made up of educators who have spent their careers involved with kids on a daily basis. Educators have been entrusted to always act in the best interest of our kids. These board members represent their communities' interest as established through their league affiliations. Being educators they also understand the needs of all Kansas kids whether from the Western or Eastern parts of our state. Our current governing body of the KSHSAA is efficient, effective, and diverse and it simply works. In my opinion adding 38 additional non educators to the board of directors will not enhance the effectiveness and could possibly negatively affect our process. In simple terms, if it is not broke, don't fix it. Our current process is not only envied but copied throughout the nation by other state associations. Professionals know what works.

In my 41 years I have never had one complaint from a parent, patron, student, athlete, teacher, coach or anyone that felt they were not represented by the KSHSAA. In contrast, they feel there is a process to be heard. Coaches feel that they also have a process that includes their sports organizations and our state organizations to present ideas and or concerns to the association.

In closing, our decisions should always be based on what is good for kids. Changing our current system is not in the best interest of our kids.

Rusty Newman

Director Student Services