

Highland
Chairman ~~Abrams~~ and Education Committee,

17 March 2015

Growing up being homeschooled was more than a unique experience. I absolutely loved growing up educated at home. The level of commitment and work that went into my education was high. We were not educated at home because we did not want nor like the public school environment. It was a decision that my family made that they felt was best for all of us. It is a decision that has benefitted me greatly throughout high school and then going to Kansas State University. I saw the education translate to success at college as I finished with a 3.7 GPA and was on the Academic All Big XII teams all four years I was at Kansas State University.

Sports were always a huge part of my life growing up. Being in a family where my father played collegiate and professional sports, it was just part of what we did and what we enjoyed doing. Growing up, we played on club teams, traveled and competed with public school athletes and grew up alongside them. As I got to the high school age, the opportunities grew more limited with sports. I not only could not play at the high school sports level, I had to figure out a way to compete during the winter months to get myself at a playing level for the club teams season in the spring/summer months. I didn't have the luxury of competing with those same athletes I competed with during the summer; and the only difference was my family made the decision to be educated at home.

I did however, have the chance to compete during the fall and winter months with a homeschooled academy out of Olathe, KS named Metro Academy. Throughout my high school career, we saw more opportunities open up as Metro Academy was sanctioned by KSSHA as an "independent, rural" school and we were allowed to compete against public schools. Metro Academy continues to compete against some of the biggest and widely known public and private high schools in and around the Kansas City area. However, even though we were sanctioned, we were not allowed to compete at the state tournament.

The experience I had and the journey that got me to Kansas State University as a collegiate basketball player was a hard one. To be given the opportunity to compete at the local high school's sports would have been a door that I would have loved to be open. I would've been given the opportunity to compete for a state championship for my local high school, with friends I knew and loved. I would've been able to contribute to a cause bigger than my own. Being educated at home is something I cherish to this day, but I do not think homeschool athletes should be punished and not allowed to compete at the high school level in some states and then allowed in others. It needs to be a consistent opportunity. Many times I thought growing up, "Maybe we could move to another state that allows me to compete for a state championship." I know I am not the only one that had that thought, that dream growing up. Not all athletes get the chance to compete in Division 1 sports like I did. High school sports is their one shot, their four years to give towards something bigger, something better. In many towns, high school

sports athletes are the talk of the town. Many kids grow up dreaming of being that. I know I did.

I understand there needs to be strict rules and regulations enforced to make sure this is done right. There are many that would abuse this just to get into the sports team or the sports environment they want to. No, this is not about that; this is about giving kids the opportunity to be involved in their communities sports teams and compete along side their friends and teammates on club teams. This is about giving that high school basketball player his/her shot at winning a state championship. The football player who doesn't have club sports as an option now has the opportunity to play football in high school. That is what this bill is about. It is about giving homeschooled athletes the chance to compete. We have shown that the home education system does work and translate to the collegiate level. I for one know it can translate to the sports fields and courts as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shalin Klein". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Shalin Klein