

Senate Standing Committee on Education

Testimony Supporting **SB 60**

AN ACT concerning schools; relating to the Kansas state high school activities association; relating to participation by certain students.

February 2, 2015

Chairman Abrams,

Senate Bill 60 provides that any student who is resident in a public school district can participate in public school activities. This would allow any such student who is attending a private school, including private home schools, to play in the band or participate in forensics or debate, or to play sports at the local public school so long as they fulfill the same requirements, including fees, that the local district puts upon their own students. It would also allow a public school student who graduates early to complete his fourth year of eligibility of playing a sport.

The intention of this legislation is equal protection under the law, allowing all residents, all tax payers in the district, if you will, due process in their property interest in the free public education provided for by the Kansas Constitution. Private school families, just like everyone else, pay the taxes that fund public schools. Just as it is unacceptable to exclude those attending private school from publicly funded areas such as libraries, hospitals, and parks, so it is unacceptable to exclude those attending private school from public school programs.

Currently, 22 states give those attending private schools the right to some access to activities and sports in the public schools. This includes our neighbors; Colorado, Nebraska, and Iowa, as well as many other Midwestern states. For more details, see the attached document from HSLDA and the online links.

Providing the best education possible to Kansas's children is certainly in the interest of the state. Giving parents, who best know the educational needs of their children, the flexibility and the tools they require to provide the best education they can for their children is in the interest of the state. Technology today is giving parents many more choices to meet their children's educational needs. The state needs to give public schools the ability to compete in this rapidly changing modern world. The Kansas State High School Activities Association is limiting our public schools options in this respect.

The verbal and written testimony presented today in support of this legislation will illustrate the vast array of options that today's students and today's parents have to choose from. I ask your support in passing out SB 60 favorably for passage. Thank you for your consideration.