

Chairman Abrams and Education Committee,

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 black ink that reads "Shalin Klein". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

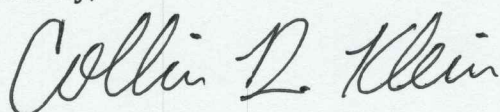
Shalin Klein

Chairman Abrams and Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience as a homeschool student that was able to participate in public school activities. I grew up in Loveland Colorado and my parents decided to homeschool beginning in first grade. I continued to homeschool through my senior year of high school. It was an amazing blessing being homeschooled. I learned the value of time management and being task oriented that served me well during my college years. I finished my career at K-State with a cumulative 3.2 GPA with a dual major in Business Finance and a minor in Leadership. I was on the Academic All Big XII teams all four years I contributed in college. In Colorado you are allowed to participate in the public high school athletically and also academically. I played basketball and football for Loveland High School. I was a four-year starter on the varsity basketball team with a couple career records. I was a three-year letterman in football and also had career marks in multiple categories. I also participated in the High School Orchestra program for one year. I competed and worked my way to second chair 1st Violin. These opportunities had a wonderful impact on me that enriched my homeschool education.

It was an honor to be able to contribute to the local school. In Colorado much like my experience in Kansas is that there is strong affinity among communities for their high schools and athletic teams. This was a blast to be able to play and represent our community on the field of competition. Being able to play sports taught me invaluable life lessons of hard work, teamwork, delayed gratification, and striving to be my best. I learned how to be a good winner and loser but not accept the latter. I learned about leadership and how to serve the best interest of the team ahead of myself. These lessons that sports provided are only available to many through the local high school. I developed relationships and got to make memories with my 'neighbors' that I wouldn't trade for the world. I got to play local T-Ball in first grade with the same guys I played football and basketball with my senior year. This bond and opportunity is something I took for granted until I realized not all states allow homeschoolers to participate in sports. Most young men and women will only have four years to have some of these opportunities. For the vast majority of students this is their only opportunity to learn these lessons through sport. I was blessed to have the opportunity to compete in college and continue my athletic education but this is the exception. Having the opportunity to be a part of the community and learn life lessons through sport changed and shaped my life and has made me who I am today. I hope and pray that parents and students would have the ability to choose what education situation is best of their family and be able to still be a part of their communities through sport.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Collin D. Klein". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Collin Klein