

David S. Morrow
St. Francis Community High School
100 S. College
St. Francis, KS 67756

January 19, 2023

Dear Senator Baumgardner,

Thank you for allowing me to provide my written testimony about the importance of Senate Bill No. 13, proposed by Senators Hawk and Billinger.

Since 2009, Openspaces Sports has been providing a valuable service to schools in western Kansas by broadcasting video and play-by-play analyses of many different sports and activities. These broadcasts have been invaluable to people from the communities this organization covers. In the thirteen years since their inception, many sports fans from the St. Francis area have been able to watch live sporting events from the comfort of their homes when traveling to the games was not an option. These community members are friends, parents, grandparents, and fans in general of the teams competing in football, volleyball, boys' and girls' wrestling, boys' and girls' basketball, and track. In fact, community members have reached out to me personally to express their thankfulness for being allowed to watch their student-athletes compete.

In post-season competitions, however, many of these fans have been deprived of that opportunity unless they pay a subscription to the NFHS network. Because of the prohibition against local broadcasting networks providing live video of post-season events, especially at the state tournament/championship level, our community members have not only been deprived of hearing familiar, trusted voices give play-by-play analyses of these events, they are also subjected to the fallibility of the NFHS broadcast. For instance, in the last 7 years, our 1A football team has played in three state championship games. In every case, fans who have paid to have the NFHS broadcast have complained bitterly about the experience, citing many instances of paying the subscription to have large portions of the games cut out due to technical difficulties. Openspace Sports has had a remarkable record of dependability, and any fan in our area of the state could count on their broadcast being not only professional but reliable as well.

In addition to the negative experiences we have had with post-season football and the NFHS network, we have also not been allowed to have Openspaces Sports broadcast either of our two appearances in the 1A state volleyball tournament in the last three years or in our two boys' basketball state tournaments. No entity like the NFHS network should have a monopoly on this crucial service at the high school level. It is also true that the NFHS network has engaged in an aggressive marketing campaign to get high schools to sign contracts with them for broadcasting services that borders on the extreme. I have personally had at least 40 emails and a handful of

phone calls from their representatives to try to get St. Francis to sign such a contract after telling them "No" each time.

Local broadcasters like Openspaces Sports should have the ability to broadcast post-season events. I have read Senate Bill No. 13, which was proposed by Senators Hawk and Billinger, and agree with the tenets of that proposal. It seems to be a common-sense approach to extending the opportunity for western Kansas fans to have a familiar, trusted source for post-season broadcasting. And considering the issues many fans have had with the NFHS broadcasts, the bill would solve the problem of paying for a service that is of dubious quality.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David S. Morrow".

David S. Morrow
Principal, SFCHS