



Oral opponent testimony on

HB 2506,

Authorizing students enrolled in virtual schools to participate in activities that are regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association at such student's resident school district without a minimum enrollment requirement in such resident school district.

By

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

KASB opposes HB 2506 based on our member-directed legislative policies on local control and support for the KSHSAA's oversight of student activities.

In addition, HB 2506 is fundamentally unfair to public school students and prioritizes extracurricular activities over academics.

HB 2506 allows private virtual school students to participate in public school extracurricular activities without complying with the same academic standards as their public-school counterparts. This is fundamentally unfair to the public-school students who also want to participate in the extracurricular activities that are such a valuable part of the public-school experience. This bill expects public-school students to follow the rules, but excuses virtual school students from most of those same rules.

And under a possible interpretation of the bill, local brick-and-mortar public school students could be cut from extracurricular activities in favor of virtual school students who don't even attend a virtual school based in the state of Kansas, let alone their local community.

HB 2506 as it's currently written could allow students enrolled in *any virtual school in Kansas* to participate in local public-school extracurricular activities, not just the virtual schools run by local public-school districts. For example, a student who lives in Junction City could attend a virtual school based in Georgia, or Missouri, or any number of other states, and be allowed to participate in extracurriculars in Junction City without meeting Junction City public schools' expectations for academic progress or achievement. That's fundamentally unfair to Junction City students and to their taxpayer parents. If that is a drafting error, we respectfully suggest a revision.

Public-school extracurricular activities, whether they be the "Friday Night Lights" of high school sports seasons; debate, forensics, and drama programs; or band and orchestra, are an important part of large

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and small communities across our state. If Kansans wish their students to have the benefits of participating in those activities, our members feel those students should do so while meeting the expectations of local public-school boards and the KSHSAA.

And finally, although KASB members vigorously support and provide any number of extracurricular activities for Kansas students, we're troubled that at the end of the day, HB 2506 promotes activities over academics by establishing only minimal standards for virtual school students compared to their brick-and-mortar public-school counterparts. This is not only unfair, but also bad for all students involved. Academics should be our primary focus.

Kansas public schools are producing young people who will ensure a bright future for our state. Please join us in supporting those young people by opposing HB 2506.

KASB is a non-profit service organization built on an abiding belief in Kansas public schools. We have put the needs of students and K-12 leaders first since 1917.