

Testimony before the
House Committee for Education
on

HB 2540

by

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I understand that there has been a bill proposed (HB 2540) in regard to participation of home school students in activities currently available to public school students. I have been a principal for 27 years in this district and have been able to observe some of the effects that this bill might allow. The first concern would be in the area of accountability. Students are required to meet certain standards in order to participate in activities at our school and these entail such things as grades, attendance, participation, and citizenship. I coached for 13 years prior to becoming a principal and have observed that all of these areas are crucial to making an activity program what it should be. KSHSAA has developed expectations for students that are very much in line with the expectations at our school. The expectations for our school has been developed and are enforced by staff, administration, KSHSAA, and our board of education to the benefit of all students. The question becomes whether students outside our school system would be held to any standards.

Students and their parents in a home school setting are able to determine what is passing, what counts as attendance, what is good citizenship. I am not being critical of students that are home schooled; I have witnessed families that have provided a quality education and that have worked hard to assure that their children are prepared. I have also seen families that spent very little time learning and have not held their children accountable in any manner. This is the dilemma that would occur if this bill were allowed to become law. Who determines what is acceptable and who holds students accountable to participate?

The next concern is what, if any, participation should be allowed. What is the difference between athletics and activities? Should home school students be allowed to participate in athletics then why not any other area that they choose to; field trips, events at school, concerts, dances, special education, or a multitude of other activities that the public schools host. Home school parents have made a choice to educate their children in a different manner and I support their right to make that decision. This choice, as with all choices, has ramifications and that is a decision that these parents have made.