

Members of the HOUSE K-12 Education Committee,

My name is Philip Hoppe and I am a father to seven children who are homeschooled by my wife. I also serve as a pastor to a mid-sized Christian congregation in Kansas. We live in Colby, Kansas having moved here about a year ago from Minnesota. I grew up in Shawnee, Kansas, attending both private and public schools there. I also served a church in Ellsworth, Kansas for over 12 years. I consider Kansas home. I can be contacted at pastorhoppe@gmail.com.

I am testifying in regards to HB 2030 (Authorizing nonpublic school students to participate in activities regulated by the Kansas state high school activities association and allowing nonpublic school students who enroll part time in a public school to participate in nonpublic school activities) today.

I testify as a strong proponent of this bill. In Minnesota where we lived recently, the current laws were very similar to what is proposed in HB 2030. We enjoyed having that chance for our children to participate in activities which the public school offers while still enjoying the freedom to homeschool our children.

Especially out in Western Kansas, it can be very hard to find many activities for children who are not enrolled in the public schools. Especially once children get past sixth grade, many communities do not have community or recreation teams for this age because the schools provide those opportunities to most children. Personally, we are likely in a better situation than most because a local Christian school allows us to play the sports they offer and there is also one other association that organizes some sports in the general area.

Of course, even for us, the number of activities offered by these smaller schools and associations are limited and the quality is often quite different from year to year since it relies on volunteers greatly and the number of students varies.

Furthermore, it seems only equitable that since we are paying taxes at the same levels as those who do send their children to the public schools, that these activities, partially subsidized by those dollars, should be available to us for the betterment of our children. Such activities have been shown to be beneficial to those who participate. I understand that at times there can be an inconvenience in including students not in school during the day for the coaches, but I feel it is rather minimal. We are always willing to seek to ease any inconvenience.

Passage of this bill would give our children a chance to interact with other children in our community in a real way. I believe this is good for both homeschool children and also the public school children. As I pastor, I value having students from both environments in the classes I teach and in the congregation I serve.

Such interaction would lead to building relationships in the community between these students who are the future of our communities and also builds relationships between the parents of these children right now. I do not believe we want homeschooling families and public school families to be completely isolated from each other in our communities.

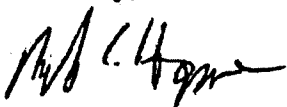
Obviously, the schools will still be free to hold tryouts and have other requirements in those schools where participation is high. These teams may also end up with some student athletes that they would otherwise not have on their teams.

I also know that there are schools that would like to be able to welcome these students but currently must make a choice between doing so and participating in the KSSHAA. I believe the Weskan School District left the KSHSAA for that reason. Smaller public schools would definitely benefit from these additional athletes.

If I can be of any aid in the passage or implementation of this bill, please let me know.

This testimony is submitted for the hearing scheduled on January 24, 2023.

Sincerely,



Philip Hoppe