

HCS HB 494 -- HOME SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

SPONSOR: Hurlbert

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 13 to 7. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 1.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 494.

This bill specifies that a school district shall not receive funding under the Foundation Formula if the district is a member of, or remits any funds to, any statewide activities association that prohibits a home school student from participating in any event or activity offered by the school district, or requires a home school student to attend the public school for any portion of a school day, except that they may be required to attend one class if the class is directly related to the event or activity.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is required to withhold payments to districts in violation of this bill until such district proves to the State Board of Education (SBE) that the school district has ceased membership in the organization.

This bill further provides that a statewide activities association shall not prohibit or restrict any school district that is a member of the association from participating in any events authorized or regulated by the association with any school that is not a member of the association, that school discipline policies will apply to home school students, and records created pertaining to a home school student will be made confidential.

This bill is similar to HB 2273 and SB 875 (2020) and SB 130 (2019).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that parents of home school students pay taxes to the school community and that their students should be allowed to participate in the school activities. This bill promotes equality for home school students and allows them to continue participation in sports and other activities that they enjoy outside of the school setting.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Hurlbert; Allison Nicole Weaver; Ashley Gunnels; Brett W Downing; Bruce Anderson; Caleb Nelson; Carly Anderson; Colter Camp; Curtis Spieker; Deb Anderson; Edward Willoughby; Emily Beeson; Keith Shepherd; Luke Shepherd; Maddy Karst; Melisha Meredith; Michelle Burnam; Nikki Evers; Rachel R Bach; Ryan Meredith; Stephanie Sohm; Will Shepherd; Ezekiel Spieker; Rachel Steele; Jonah Spieker; Jacob Allen Schelp; and Shannon Slee.

OPPONENTS: There was not any opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say this is a complex issue with problems when trying to impose discipline on home school students for their involvement in a school activity, and concerns for co-curricular classes like band and theater.

Testifying on the bill were Family Covenant Ministries; and Missouri Alliance For Arts Education.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.