

HCS HB 857 -- SCHOOL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

SPONSOR: Deaton

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education by a vote of 7 to 6.

This bill defines "association" and "home school" and states that any public school that participates in any activity sponsored by an association must provide home school students, who reside in their attendance area, with the opportunity to participate in these activities in the same manner as the students enrolled in the school.

Home school students who participate or seek to participate are subject to the same age limit, fees, insurance, transportation, physical condition, qualifications, event schedules, standards of behavior, and performance requirements as enrolled students.

The person who provides home school instruction to the student must certify that the student is proficient in their schoolwork. The association cannot prohibit a home school student from participating (Section 167.045, RSMo).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that home school students should have the same access to benefits of public schools that their tax dollars help to support. Supporters also indicate that communities thrive when they work with home schooler students, and that even with the Missouri High School Athletic Association making modifications there are still school districts that do not allow home school students to participate in school extra curriculars.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Deaton; Cathy Jo Loy; Ezekiel Spieker; and Jonah Spieker.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that requiring home school students to "register" and provide "grades" greatly impacts home school programs that have remained autonomous and removed from requirements that this bill would require for participation in extracurriculars.

Testifying against the bill was Family Covenant Ministries.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say that no additional legislation allowing home schoolers to participate has been repealed.

Testifying on the bill was the Home School Legal Defense

Association.