

HCS SS SCS SBs 411 & 230 -- STUDENTS IN NONTRADITIONAL EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

SPONSOR: Brown (226)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on General Laws by a vote of 9 to 4, with 4 present. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Regulatory Oversight by a vote of 6 to 3.

Please see the Summary Sheet for a detailed list of the additional language added to the House Substitute.

Portions of this bill contain a delayed effective date.

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

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that it is unfair that home schooled kids are not allowed to participate in school sports and activities, despite paying local taxes and otherwise supporting these programs. Life skills developed through the participation in school sports and activities is important. This bill offers an important developmental opportunity to home schooled kids, while still applying disciplinary standards. Currently, policies for home school participation is not uniform between different school districts, and some policies of certain districts can be onerous. This opens discrimination against home schooled students for their participation in sports and activities. It should be enough that home school students stay in compliance with state law on home school eligibility and standards to qualify for participation in school activities.

Testifying in person for the bill were Senator Brown; Lauren Ross; Sheryl Schmidt, Families For Home Education, Inc.; Jonah Spieker; Judah Meredith; Lydia Meredith; Melody Meredith; Matthew Meredith; and Ryan Meredith.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the provisions of this bill relating to four-day school week restrictions are targeted and unfair. Currently, over 160 school districts are using the four-day school week option; this legislation is written specifically to prevent Independence from implementing a four-day school week. Opponents say offering a grandfather clause for those schools that have already adopted a four-day school week is appropriate. This bill will stifle recruitment and retention of teachers. This bill takes away local control and options. Further, opponents expressed concern with the establishment of a

new "Family-Led Educational eXperience (FLEX) school" category of home school students. This new category home school students will have to fit into to be able to participate in school events and activities will inevitably lead to additional regulations.

Testifying in person against the bill were Danielle Dent-Breen, Kansas City Homeschool Connection; Dale Herl, Independence School District; and Matt Michelson.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say there are potential consequences from this legislation that have not been properly weighed. Others testifying say it is important that home schoolers can maintain their status as home schoolers. The creation of this new FLEX category and the participation of home school students in certain school activities is distinct from home school students who do not wish to participate in, or be subject to oversight, by schools or the government at all. There needs to be a distinction to ensure home schoolers are still protected.

Testifying in person on the bill were David Klarich, Family Covenant Ministries; Missouri Association of Career & Technical Education; and the Mo Alliance for Arts Education.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony and witnesses testifying online can be found under "House Testimony on Senate Bills" on the House website.