



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 1361		DATE: 3/10/2025	
COMMITTEE: Special Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JOE PRICE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: joseph.price@lps53.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 3/8/2025 10:42 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

My name is Joe Price and I'm the head coach at Liberty high school where Rue got ruled ineligible to play. I had never seen Rue play or met him before he transferred to Liberty. Rue is an outstanding young man and used basketball as a way to get through tough aspects in life and around hardships he had, he had the opportunity to move into a much better life situation but then got the 1 thing he loved taken away from him. It was very hard to see the logic behind adults who are suppose to help kids take this away with all the facts shared. Him moving in with an AAU teammate seemed to be a focal point but don't all parents want their kids in the best living situation possible. Any of us would do that for our kids. Then to take away the 1 thing that's in his control to get ahead in life with scholarship money and zero college debt and with all the NIL money available now. All MSHAA did was add another obstacle for a kid living in a tough environment. Then BOTH principals from each school wrote letters for him to play, why does MSHAA get to overrule that and the AD did NOT mark the box on him transferring for athletic reasons so again why did MSHAA feel the need to override all of that? There are multiple kids playing after multiple moves in high school so I'd just like to see FULL transparency on all kids playing and denied as this was a travesty for this young man created by adults in position to help.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MEGHAN K FLAVIN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: meghkflavin@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2025 12:56 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am Meghan Flavin. I am honored to be able to participate today, remotely, on behalf of Rue Wells, his biological mother, and his current guardians. As a lifetime advocate for the voiceless and underserved, I am honored to be participating in the conversation surrounding HB 1361. Short bio on me - I am a therapist, educator and former athletic director in a Title 1 school in Kansas City, Missouri. I am, and always will be, passionate about kids and their ability to participate in sport. So much so that I got a Master's in Sports Management so I could have all the knowledge to help my student athletes as well as my own children traverse the collegiate landscape and to break down barriers of entry. I have also been blessed to mentor families through the overly complicated MSHSAA process for the past few years. Unfortunately I wasn't contacted in time with regard to Rue's situation, but maybe I can help others in the future. Rue, like many kids, was caught in the middle of an unnecessary and egregiously political situation. There never should have been a question about his eligibility. He gained a new guardian. He moved. He now lived within a new school district. Period. End of story. But because he didn't fall into one of MSHSAA's oddly shaped boxes he was given the runaround. He was denied the one thing that brought him happiness (especially during a time of much transition). [The school and MSHSAA had no problem with him playing football (and they will say it is because he didn't play Varsity football at his previous school), even after being entered into the system as a transfer.] He was denied the ability to showcase his talent to potential scouts, losing out on college offers and much needed scholarships. Rue didn't deserve that. And neither do any other student athletes that have similar major life changes. There are plenty of statistics that show how important being involved with extracurricular activities can be - from reducing teenage pregnancy and truancy, to increasing self esteem and grades. But more than that, for many, sport is the one constant, consistently good thing in their lives. Sport doesn't just keep kids out of trouble, it allows them a productive way to alleviate stress, socialize in a controlled, positive environment, and be a part of a family - that some kids don't have. The team environment and the mentorship from the coaches are important to all athletes, but I would argue even more so for those going through some very adult things at such a young age. MSHSAA has had antiquated rules for years. And sadly those rules aren't doing the job they were intended to do. Kids that are jumping districts for the wrong reasons are being passed through without question and those (like Rue) who should legitimately be approved are being dragged through an awful "judicial" process unnecessarily. MSHSAA is supposed to be all about the kids and helping schools provide all of the possible opportunities for our students to succeed, but then they put up roadblocks, that at one point may have had a good intention, for those that are especially vulnerable and in need of all the positive attributes sport can provide. My hope, with HB 1361, is that the long, drawn out process of appealing a MSHSAA decision will be significantly shortened - they only offer one set of appeal dates per season on their calendar and you have to work really hard on a special appeal date. They are not interested in hearing cases outside of their scheduled times, especially if they have already told

you no. And they will not hear an appeal that may have several parts to it - like, it doesn't fit 100% into one category or another, but it is a legitimate appeal. This bill should set up an impartial board, that is open to hearing facts, but also is capable of hearing and handling the emotional side of some of the reasons kids move. Guardianship is hard, and not currently an option under MSHSAA. They only speak in terms of full family move or divorced parent situations. They do not acknowledge what many kids have to live through, a change of address due to safety, health and well-being. Being a guardian myself, I know how hard the transitions are. Kids need support, not barriers. My ultimate hope with this bill is to create a safe space for the unheard. To keep kids in sports and out of trouble. And by trouble, I don't mean legal or administrative - I mean mental health type struggles. Not having sport or continuity in life can bring about lots of internal struggles, which can be heightened by major life changes. MSHSAA should be aligning themselves with kids in Rue's situation rather than pushing them away and causing more damage. Thank you for the time to provide my opinion and thoughts. I am blessed to now be a friend of Steve, Holly, Rue and Kale through this situation. I am honored to be asked to be a part of the conversation. What Steve and Holly (and Kale) have done for Rue is amazing and I am so glad they are continuing to fight the good fight. The nurturing environment they have provided and the ongoing support will be what gets Rue to the next level, and he knows that, but not all kids currently have the Mortimer's as advocates - not yet, but once this bill passes the Mortimer's will be the advocate that all have needed for years. Thank you, Meghan Flavin



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STEPHEN MORTIMER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2025 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C."HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCATE		PHONE NUMBER:	
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EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2025 11:59 PM
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I am Opposed to this Version of the Bill. The State Board of Education was been taken out of the Bill. This makes Appointments Political to the Appeals Board. A person can always Appeal to the County Circuit Court for a Hearing, Ruling and Decision.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MIKE LODEWEGEN		PHONE NUMBER: 638-2692	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 3500 AMAZONAS			
CITY: JC		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 3/10/2025 12:00 AM	
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