

HCS HBs 2278 & 2403 -- STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATIONS

SPONSOR: Cook

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Government Efficiency by a vote of 11 to 7. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative by a vote of 7 to 3 with 1 member voting present.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HBs 2278 & 2403.

This bill requires that beginning in the 2027-2028 school year, any appeals of decisions made by an statewide activities association can be heard by the "Interscholastic Athletic Activities Appeals Board", an appeals board appointed by the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

The term of office of each director will be four years, with the initial appointments staggered such that two members will serve terms of two years and three members will serve terms of four years.

The bill defines an "activities association" as a nonprofit statewide organization that facilitates interscholastic activities for secondary school students, and whose members include at least one public school district that pays any fees to the association, including any fees relating to membership in the association or participation in any activities facilitated by the association.

This bill requires that once the activities association's appeals process is exhausted, the appeals board will hear all subsequent appeals. If a decision is needed within 48 hours, then an appeal can be made directly to the appeals board. Hearings on such appeals can be conducted in-person, over the telephone, video conferencing, or other remote communication.

The appeals board can hear the following appeals:

- (1) Appeals relating to transfer students deemed to be for athletic purposes;
- (2) Appeals relating to athletic contests; and

(3) Appeals relating prior decisions made by an activities association that resulted in the student's disqualification or prohibition from participating in any athletic activity.

Decisions made by the appeals board are final and the activities association must abide by that decision.

The bill requires the activities association to prepare an annual report and present to the House and Senate committee chosen by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tem of the senate within the first 30 days of the legislative session

This bill is similar to SB 863 (2026).

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

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that MSHSAA is the only real option for schools wanting to participate in statewide high school athletics, but once MSHSAA makes a final decision, there is often no appeal and no clear reason for their decision. Supporters further state that this bill will promote transparency and accountability. Because public schools have to pay fees to and follow the rules made by MSHSAA, mistakes made by this organization shouldn't have to be addressed in a court of law. Allowing an organization to set and enforce rules, and then to also allow the same organization to handle any appeals upon those enforced rules, can create a conflict of interest or bias.

Testifying in person for the bill was Representative Cook.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that MSHSAA is an unincorporated voluntary association whose membership includes public schools who can vote on rule changes every year and who came together to found the association 100 years ago. Circumstances change over time, and when a current rule has an impact on students that was not contemplated years ago and therefore no longer serves a useful purpose, there exists a democratic process to address that situation. Opponents further state that there are already in place advisory committees made up of coaches and other representatives with expert-level knowledge who currently apply that knowledge and expertise in the very types of situations that this bill seeks to address.

Testifying in person against the bill were Dr. Jennifer Rukstad, MSHSAA; and Missouri Council of School Administrators.

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