



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2278		DATE: 1/22/2026	
COMMITTEE: Government Efficiency			
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: NICK OPENSHAW		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 5:53 PM	
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MSHSAA frustration:

I had a basketball player at Mountain Grove transfer to Norwood in Aug 2023. His family lived on N Highway in the Mtn Grove district (not near the school district line). His family bought a butcher shop in Norwood. MSHSAA granted his "hardship waiver" to play for Norwood immediately. While I do not know the details of what they put in the waiver, a student not moving and playing for another school because of the "hardship" created by a family owning a business 10 miles from the school he played for while he was able to drive himself seems absurd. Family had frustrations with younger girl that led to the transfer and I still use the butcher shop to this day. My frustration lies with MSHSAA and their lack of willingness to pretend there is accountability with these transfers. If they are going to play by the rules the way they look now they just need to bring open enrollment and quite pretending like they care



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: TASHA DUNKEL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 6:27 PM	
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To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this written testimony to formally request review and consideration of the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA) transfer eligibility rules, specifically regarding the limited scope of current exceptions and their unintended impact on students whose transfers are not athletically motivated.

My son attended the Waynesville School District from kindergarten through the completion of his sophomore year. At the time of his enrollment, our family resided in that district, and my husband continues to teach there. In 2020, our family built and moved into a home located in the Crocker School District, where we have resided continuously for the past five years. Due to my profession as a nurse working extended shifts, and my husband's employment in Waynesville, we made the practical decision to keep our children enrolled in Waynesville for consistency and transportation purposes.

Over the past two academic years, my son began to experience increasing social challenges. While his academic performance remained strong, his difficulty forming peer relationships became more pronounced as he matured. Despite appropriate support, the larger school environment proved increasingly difficult for him socially and emotionally.

During the summer prior to transferring, my son participated in a summer baseball league composed of students from Crocker, Iberia, Dixon, Mountain Grove, and other small districts. During this experience, we observed a significant and positive change in his social engagement, confidence, and overall well-being. He developed meaningful friendships and expressed a sense of belonging that had been absent for several years. Based on these developments, he requested to transfer to Crocker High School, believing that the smaller school environment would better support his social and emotional needs.

After reviewing Crocker High School's academic offerings and considering that we reside within the district boundaries, we approved the transfer. Athletics were not the motivating factor. There was no recruitment, no outreach from coaches or school staff, and no intent to gain a competitive advantage. In fact, the transfer was from a Class 6 school to a Class 2 school.

Following the transfer, we learned that because my son had previously participated in varsity athletics at Waynesville, he is now subject to a 365-day varsity ineligibility period under current MSHSAA regulations. While he is permitted to participate at the junior varsity level, this restriction results in the

loss of an entire year of varsity eligibility. Our appeal was denied because our circumstances did not fall within the narrow exceptions currently allowed.

While we understand the purpose of transfer rules and support efforts to prevent recruiting and maintain competitive fairness, this case highlights a gap in the current framework. Under existing rules, exceptions may be granted when families relocate for athletic purposes, when employment circumstances change, or under other narrowly defined conditions. However, no exception exists for students who reside within the district they attend, nor for transfers motivated by documented social, emotional, or developmental needs.

As a result, students transferring for legitimate, non-athletic reasons may face the same penalties as those transferring for competitive advantage. This outcome appears inconsistent with the intent of the policy and disproportionately impacts students seeking a healthier educational environment.

I respectfully request that MSHSAA and relevant legislative bodies consider expanding or refining transfer eligibility exceptions to account for circumstances such as:

- Students transferring into their district of residence**
- Transfers motivated by social, emotional, or developmental well-being**
- Transfers involving no evidence of recruiting or athletic intent**

A more nuanced approach would preserve the integrity of interscholastic athletics while ensuring that students are not penalized for prioritizing their overall well-being.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

**Respectfully submitted,
Tasha Dunkel**



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: AMY HARRIS		PHONE NUMBER: 573-721-1774
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI SCHOLASTIC ESPORTS FEDERATION		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ADDRESS: 905 NORTH WADE STREET		
CITY: MEXICO	STATE: MO	ZIP: 65265
EMAIL: amyh@mosef.org	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 6:30 PM

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I am writing today in regards to HB 2278 on behalf of the board of directors of the Missouri Scholastic Esports Federation (MOSEF). We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit composed of volunteer educators from around the state working together to provide equitable and educational scholastic esports opportunities for Missouri students.

We understand that this bill is specifically focused on concerns with MSHSAA. While we have a respectful relationship with that organization, our schools successfully voted down MSHSAA's involvement in scholastic esports in 2024. However, this bill will also directly affect organizations like ours since it is broadly targeted at all nonprofits providing Missouri school activities. For example, we collect an optional participation fee for our competitive seasons in order to offset the cost of our in-person events and awards, so we would be another organization that the proposed board requirements would apply to.

Additionally, we are concerned that the bill only affects nonprofits. Unlike MSHSAA, most nonprofit activities associations that we are aware of do not prohibit schools from providing student opportunity in multiple organizations, which means there are also national for-profit companies in our spaces. Returning to our example, the teachers and school staff that run MOSEF work very hard to protect student data privacy and equitable access to esports for all Missouri schools and students. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all of our for-profit competition. We are worried that pulling all of the nonprofits under the oversight of a government committee will ultimately result in less opportunity for our students in many activities.

Thank you for your time. Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any questions or give any further information on our board's position.

Amy Harris
 Executive Director, Missouri Scholastic Esports Federation
 Teacher, Hart Career Center (Mexico)



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: DAVA-LEIGH		PHONE NUMBER: 314-600-6018
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI EQUITY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP		TITLE: PAL TEAM LEAD
ADDRESS: PO BOX 1352		
CITY: ST. CHARLES		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 63302
EMAIL: dlb@missouriequity.com	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 10:31 AM

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MOOEP opposes this bill. We believe in local control whenever possible. We are concerned that with an appointed board and senate oversight could politicize the decisions of the board. MSHSAA governs all activities which are diverse in type and constitution therefore the governance should be diverse. Having groups among MSHSAA which are experts in their sports/activities make MSHSAA stronger and better suited to their tasks.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DAWN POWER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 6:26 PM	
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Absolutely not. What in the world would make anyone think that this would be okay by anyone except maybe this assembly or the governor himself. This whiffs of a Kremlin style government. Is the state of Missouri looking to become the new Soviet Union of the United States?



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DIANE BURTON		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 10:36 PM
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This is a bad bill



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: DON CROZIER		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 8:40 PM

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This bill adds unnecessary bureaucracy to a system that is working well. Schools voluntarily join MSHSAA and have to power to propose, vote on and change rules. The government taking control of a private nonprofit is unnecessary and an overreach. I thought Republicans want smaller government?



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DONNA BRADLEY-JAEGER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 3:18 PM	
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The government has no business taking over private non-profits when they can't even manage their current responsibilities like paying child care providers to name just one issue! Stop bowing to the orange menace!



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DR. JENNIFER RUKSTAD		PHONE NUMBER: 573-875-4880	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MSHSAA		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	
ADDRESS: 1 N. KEENE ST.			
CITY: COLUMBIA		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65201
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: JOSEPH MARKHAM		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 3:22 PM
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This proposed legislation is an example of government overreach. It should be limited to Missouri's Inspector General having the power to audit the financials of these organizations based on allegations of financial fraud received by the Inspector General. As the legislation is now written, it would appear this proposed oversight committee would have broad powers regulating what activities may or may not be appropriate. These decisions are best left to the local school boards and organizations and not statewide political organizations.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KORTNIE HUDDLESTON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 9:33 PM	

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This bill is a direct attack on local control and a blatant power grab, cloaked in the language of oversight. It seeks to inject partisan politics into the purest spaces of our communities: our children's extracurricular activities. By mandating that the Governor appoint the board of directors for statewide activities associations, this legislation shatters a foundational principle—that education and the activities that enrich it should be guided by educators, parents, and local communities, not by political operatives.

This is a dangerous consolidation of authority. It opens the door for a sitting governor to politicize every aspect of student life, from athletics to academics to the arts, based on ideological litmus tests. Will a board appointed for political loyalty uphold Title IX protections for young women athletes? Will it defend the rights and dignity of LGBTQ+ students to participate fully and safely? Or will it impose a narrow, state-sanctioned agenda on our schools, punishing districts that celebrate inclusion and diversity?

This bill strips power from the grassroots—from the teachers, coaches, and local school boards who know their students best—and hands it to a distant, politically-motivated panel. It is antithetical to democracy and community self-determination. Furthermore, it creates a chilling bureaucracy where nonpartisan, volunteer-driven associations could be weaponized to enforce conformity.

We must fiercely oppose this encroachment. Our students' passions, teamwork, and joy in competition are not commodities for the Governor's office to regulate. I urge you to reject HB 2278 and protect our schools from this authoritarian overreach. Keep politics out of our playoffs. Protect local control.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LINDSEY N. NEAL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 7:03 AM	
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Good day,

I am a public high school teacher and who is in charge of the school's esports program. We participate in competitive esports throughout the state of Missouri through a non-profit organization called the Missouri Scholastic Esports Federation, or MOSEF. I am also an active volunteer in MOSEF, which is run by volunteer educators from all sectors of the industry. MOSEF serves students in public, private, and parochial schools at all grade levels except pre-K and also welcome homebound and virtual students. We run organized leagues in competitive video game titles that serve students that often do not have another place in a school that welcomes them. They learn communication, teamwork, emotional resilience, sportsmanship, and responsibility, among other life skills. MOSEF advocates for healthy life habits like exercise and nutrition. We train coaches and offer professional development opportunities to our members. My concern is that this bill will put unnecessary restrictions on organizations like ours as unforeseen fallout due to the wording of the bill. MSHSAA coaches statewide voted to not include esports in their organization. Non-profits that are trying to give students opportunities to learn and grow should not be punished with government oversight when we did nothing wrong, especially when it can give advantages to for-profit companies that are trying to take advantage of kids by charging them for the chance to play.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns,
Lindsey Neal
20-year teacher
Esports coach and program manager



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL DREYER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 9:32 PM	

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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MIKE LODEWEGEN		PHONE NUMBER: (573) 638-2692	
REPRESENTING: MO COUNCIL OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS		TITLE:	
ADDRESS: 3550 AMAZONAS DRIVE			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 1/22/2026 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: SARAH BERRY		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 9:19 AM

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I respectfully oppose HB 2278 because it creates a constitutionally unstable state takeover of a private nonprofit association without assuming the legal duties, liabilities, or safeguards that accompany government control.

HB 2278 compels a private, nonprofit activities association—one not created by statute and governed by member schools under contract—to surrender its internal governance to a Governor-appointed board confirmed by the Senate, solely because at least one public school district pays participation fees.

This structure violates core constitutional principles by imposing state control without state responsibility, triggering serious concerns under the state-action doctrine, unconstitutional conditions doctrine, and separation of powers.

First, the bill risks converting a private association into a state actor for constitutional purposes while offering no clarification regarding sovereign immunity, due-process obligations, or liability exposure under 42 U.S.C. §1983.

If the state appoints and controls the governing board, courts will reasonably treat the association as acting “under color of law,” exposing it—and potentially the state—to civil rights litigation. HB 2278 provides no statutory framework to manage or mitigate this risk.

Second, the bill presents an unconstitutional condition.

Public school participation in statewide activities is functionally necessary for students, yet HB 2278 conditions that participation on surrendering private governance to political appointment. The state may not condition access to public educational participation on relinquishment of associational autonomy where less restrictive alternatives plainly exist.

Third, HB 2278 injects political appointment power into student activities governance, an area courts have historically sought to insulate from partisan influence.

Eligibility rules, discipline, classification, and enforcement decisions should not be subject to executive appointment cycles or legislative confirmation politics. This structure invites viewpoint pressure, selective enforcement, and retaliatory governance—precisely the harms constitutional safeguards are designed to prevent.

Finally, if accountability or transparency is the stated goal, this bill is grossly overbroad.

The General Assembly could pursue narrow, lawful alternatives—such as transparency standards, procedural due-process protections, or appeals mechanisms—without seizing governance authority or destabilizing longstanding nonprofit law.

HB 2278 is not a reform; it is a forced conversion of a private association into a quasi-state entity without constitutional grounding or liability clarity.

For these reasons, and to avoid predictable litigation and institutional harm, I urge this body to reject HB 2278.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: CHRISTINE LINDEN		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 10:02 PM	
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Our son, Gage Linden, has been directly and negatively impacted by the new drug testing policy associated with the Missouri State High School Activities Association (MSHSAA). Although archery is not an MSHSAA-sanctioned sport, the Plato R-V School District requires drug testing for all extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, field trips, and dances.

In November, Gage submitted to a required drug test administered through the district’s contracted provider using rapid strip-based screening tests. The test returned a positive result for fentanyl, and based solely on this presumptive screen, the school imposed a 28-day suspension from all extracurricular activities, including archery. This result was a complete shock to our family.

Because fentanyl is a highly lethal substance and we had no explanation for possible exposure, we immediately took our son to General Leonard Wood Army Community Hospital (GLWACH) for medically administered drug testing. The hospital test confirmed that Gage was negative for fentanyl, with results available in less than five hours of the school administered test. Despite presenting this certified medical evidence to the school the following day, Gage’s suspension was not lifted. We were informed that he would remain suspended until the school’s original sample completed laboratory confirmation, a process that would take approximately 72 hours. However, those 72 hours turned into 10 days and caused him to miss three practices.

This situation highlights a fundamental flaw in how drug testing is being implemented under the umbrella of MSHSAA policies. While the district’s drug policy allows for an appeal and states that a decision will be made within ten days, the policy still permits immediate punishment during the appeal window, even when credible medical evidence contradicts the initial screening. In effect, students are treated as guilty until proven innocent.

The core issue is the scientific reliability of the testing method being used. Rapid strip tests, also known as immunoassay urine drug screens, are widely recognized in medical literature as presumptive screening tools, not definitive diagnostic tests. These tests are prone to both false positives and false negatives due to cross-reactivity with other substances and limitations in specificity (Moeller et al., 2008; Pesce et al., 2012).

Clinical toxicology standards are clear: positive immunoassay results must be confirmed using definitive laboratory methods, such as gas chromatography–mass spectrometry (GC-MS) or liquid chromatography–tandem mass spectrometry (LC-MS/MS), before conclusions are drawn or actions are taken (Langman & Bechtel, 2017). This is standard practice in hospitals and medical facilities because

immunoassays alone cannot reliably distinguish true drug exposure from analytical interference.

Fentanyl screening presents additional challenges. Research shows that fentanyl test strips and rapid screens can produce inaccurate results and should not be relied upon as conclusive evidence of exposure without confirmatory testing (Krieger et al., 2022). Medical professionals at the hospital confirmed this information to us directly.

In Gage's classroom, three students were tested, and two of those results—66.7%—were later shown to be inaccurate when compared against gas chromatography testing conducted in a medical setting. While this is a limited sample and not statistically representative of the entire testing population, it is nonetheless alarming when decisions with serious academic, emotional, and reputational consequences are based on such tools.

The real-world consequences of this false positive were significant. Gage lost access to archery practice and extracurricular participation. He experienced emotional distress, and rumors quickly spread among peers, including misinformation about his health. When other parents hear that a student tested positive for fentanyl, understandable concerns arise about whether they want their children associating with that student. This type of reputational harm cannot be undone, even after confirmatory results are received.

At present, MSHSAA does not provide clear, uniform guidance on confirmatory testing timelines, the role of medical test results, or protections for students facing false positives. As a result, districts are left to implement policies independently, often without safeguards that reflect established medical standards. Until better methods, clearer guidance, and stronger procedural protections are in place, drug testing policies risk causing more harm than good, particularly when students are disciplined based on presumptive screening results alone.

Our intent in providing this testimony is not to oppose student safety efforts, but to urge MSHSAA and its member districts to align drug testing practices with scientific evidence, medical standards, and basic principles of fairness so that innocent students are not harmed by flawed implementation.

References

Krieger, M. S., Goedel, W. C., Buxton, J. A., Lysyshyn, M., Bernstein, E., Sherman, S. G., & Green, T. C. (2022). Use of rapid fentanyl test strips among people who use drugs. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 99, 103–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2021.103430>

Langman, L. J., & Bechtel, L. K. (2017). Clinical toxicology testing: A guide for laboratory professionals. *Journal of Applied Laboratory Medicine*, 1(4), 421–434. <https://doi.org/10.1373/jalm.2016.022319>

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MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2278		DATE: 1/22/2026	
COMMITTEE: Government Efficiency			
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LAURA WAGNER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 1/21/2026 8:54 PM	

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.

My daughter was sexually assaulted by two high school boys. Both of these boys played basketball. Oregon County's Sheriff's Office was investigating at the start of their basketball season.

I personally contacted the head basketball coach and the superintendent of the district. The superintendent told me the school district was following MSHSAA protocols. MSHSAA Sports & Activities Eligibility Standards states: "Conduct involving law enforcement must be reported to your principal or athletic director immediately as your conduct may affect eligibility or contest outcomes."

*****The boys were pulled from a couple games, but it didn't last long. A few weeks later the boys were playing basketball again. The criminal investigation was on-going.**

There are numerous photos of both boys playing again. I contacted the superintendent, and she said the boys have missed half their season, it's not fair. I will note that the superintendent was informed by the sheriff's department of the on-going investigation. I then emailed MSHSAA explaining the situation and Doug Fessler, Assistant Executive Director, emailed me and stated, "Thank you for the email. Board Policy has been followed in this case."

The boys continued to play. I called MSHSAA and was told that they do not "investigate", they have to rely on districts to SELF report accurate information to them.

I find this ridiculous and insulting as MSHSAA knew what was happening, yet they allowed the boys to continue to play. That team went on to take third place at state. The outcome could have been very different for several teams that were following the rules.

MSHSAA's main job is to ensure that districts and players are following the rules that they set forth. Disregarding something like this was flat out dangerous. They allowed two players, whom I might add were both found guilty in juvenile court of sexual assault, to continue to play. Both of these boys went on to win numerous accolades in sports.

The whole situation/event was down right sickening as my daughter, who struggled to perform in school and her own sport, watched it happening. MSHSAA was supposed to help, support, and at the bare minimum follow their own policies. They failed to do so and it was repugnant to everyone in our school district and neighboring school districts.