

Testimony of Gary Brockus  
Overland Park, KS  
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HB2197  
Kansas House Federal and State Affairs Committee

Honorable Chairman, and Committee members, thanks for the opportunity to share in this debate. My testimony in support assumes the bill is amended as previously mentioned.

The KSHSAA is much like a monopoly, by exercising exclusive control over the public schools, as a result of that recognition by the legislature. The KSHSAA will present facts and figures and the argument that they provide good service, and they already have good oversight, and things are fine the way they are. As a young manager for a monopoly called ATT back in 1984, we gave the same argument, before we were broken up by the government. We all now understand that breakup was the best thing for consumers.

**HB2197 is also the best thing for consumers, by introducing a limited, more diverse healthy new element into the KSHSAA culture.** Times have changed over the past 30 years. More parental involvement is needed, desired, and proven beneficial in our schools. When you ask the basic question; what is this bill trying to do? The answer is providing more involvement, transparency, and access to parents and taxpayers from those providing the activities to our children. This is very, very important, so please listen closely. There doesn't have to be problems to justify improvements. In other areas of personal life, in business, or education, the bar is constantly being raised in the quest to excel. The KSHSAA should be no exception.

I have a personal experience to share similar in nature to this bill. In 1992, I was appointed to the Blue Valley Recreation Commission, BVRC, and elected chairperson by my peers 2 of my 4 years on the Board. Once there, it became clear to me, where the BVRC governing structure could be improved to better serve and represent our community. I and my state representative at the time, worked together on a concept that resulted in the legislature changing the BVRC governing structure to what it still is today. The Board was expanded from 5 to 7 members, Board members' picking other Board members was eliminated, and the seats were aligned along school board member boundaries. As a result of those improvements, services improved, and later in a one time study by Sports Illustrated, the BVRC was named the number one sports and recreation commission in the state. That honor had its roots when those who sat here 20 years ago had the courage and foresight to change the BVRC governing structure.

This bill as amended and intended is not a parent or legislative takeover of the KSHSAA. It is also unfortunate the KSHSAA has made divisive public statements that this bill means parents don't trust school officials. The bill is intended and should be viewed as a **complement** to what is already there. Given that, what is the downside of HB2197? How could services decline if the real end users now have more input and access? **Can the KSHSAA or anyone explain how this bill is not in the best interests of students and families?** Why are opponents ignoring the benefits of this bill? Why do opponents consider appointing just 4 parents out of 14 members on the Executive Board,

threatening? There is nothing opponents should fear if they already do things as they should. There's a sign on the wall of the State Board of Education Boardroom that says "in our decisions, the students come first". My state representative and 20 year acquaintance Ray Merrick and some other legislators who are familiar with the Association understand the Association is about their own best self interests first. By their opposition, school administrators are saying they don't want families to be more formally involved in the decisions that affect their children. There are some exceptions, but they are not willing to publicly speak out against their KSHSAA peers.

If you stay focused on the benefits of the new governing structure, and not get stuck where the KSHSAA will try to take you, your support of HB2197 as amended will make a better all around Association for all stakeholders in schools. You must have the vision, focus, and courage to act and raise the bar. Change is easy to resist, yet is one of the most powerful components of progress. With **HB2197**, the **students and parents in your districts will benefit for years to come**.

Provide Sample Problems.