



State Representative Adam C. Miller

Representative Adam Miller's Sponsor Testimony on behalf of H.B. 459 regarding prohibiting coaches from denying students the ability to participate in other co-curricular activities

Thank you to Chair Jones, Vice Chair Manchester, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the committee for allowing us to discuss HB 459 an important piece of legislation that would go a long way in improving education opportunities for Ohio's high school athletes.

I also want to thank my joint sponsor Joe Miller, an educator and an expert in student development.

HB 459 is a simple bill. It states that a high school coach cannot prohibit a student athlete from participating in another sport.

This bill does not interfere with a coach's sport or his or her decision-making. If a student athlete cannot make the team on merits, then so be it. But, the coach would not be able to say if you want to play on my team, you can't play any other sport.

For example a baseball coach; a spring sport, would not be able to cut a player who wants to play on the golf team; a fall sport.

Denying students the ability to participate in more than one activity is problematic for multiple reasons.

First, it puts the coach's self-interest over the student athlete's.

Second, student athletes are better served in growth and development as young people when they try a wide variety of sports, clubs, extra-curricular activities from leadership, to self-confidence, to developing the whole student.

Third, there is significant academic literature that illustrates the much higher likelihood of injury when students "specialize" in one activity to the exclusion of other sports.

And lastly, from a practical view and one of great interest in this state, are the ideas of former OSU football coach Urban Meyer, a longtime advocate of multi-sport athletes.

Coach Meyer has said, "I think you should play multiple sports, I always like the athletes that play more than one sport."

High school sports should be about developing future leaders as part of a comprehensive academic approach to personal learning and growth that includes co-curricular activities.

High school sports are about the student – plain and simple.

We shouldn't need this bill, but I have heard repeatedly from parents and teachers and coaches that specialization is failing our students.

I ask you for your support.

Thank you.