

Dear Chairman Heinert and House Education Committee Members,

My name is Margo Knorr, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today in support of HB 1491. I had hoped this issue would have been resolved in the previous session so that students and families like those here today and last session could have been protected sooner.

Those of us in support of HB 1491 are not asking for a perfect solution; we simply need a reasonable and practical approach that considers the unique hardships families face when transferring students. The North Dakota High School Activities Association's current transfer rule has evolved into an overly complex regulatory system disconnected from common sense and has been revised many times over. For example:

- In 2006, the ineligibility period for transfers was extended from 90 days to 180 days.
- In 2009, students were prohibited from transferring back to their home district.
- In 2016, the ineligibility period increased from 180 days to one full fiscal year.

These and other changes have created a labyrinth of rules that leave little room for common sense rulings on individual cases.

This situation reminds me of the challenges encountered with Title IX. Multiple changes through revision and other means diluted its purpose and, in some cases, harmed those it was meant to protect. As a former high school and collegiate athlete, a four-time All-American, a mother of three children in sports, and an Independent Women's Network Chapter Leader, I have witnessed firsthand the importance of restoring common sense. I was honored to stand in the White House last week with President Trump as he signed an executive order banning men from participating in women's sports—a decision signifying a commitment to common sense. Following suit, [the NCAA updated its organization's rules the following day](#).

Bold and decisive action is called for when a rule does not allow for common sense application.

There were concerns about proposing a law [last session](#) regarding transfers and hardships, so a compromise was reached with a study proposal. It received a resounding “do pass” out of committee hearings and a strong majority passing through both the house and senate. However, it was not effective in producing common sense resolutions. The [increasingly severe consequences](#) we see now make it clear that stronger action is needed immediately. The current transfer rulings and outcomes undermine the values of compassion, fairness, community, and common sense that are central to who we are as North Dakotans. We can and should do better.

My hope is for there to be a restoration of common sense through this bill allowing children to simply go to school where they reside without being penalized for doing so.

My interest in this issue is personal. My family was directly impacted when our hardship exemption was denied, resulting in our children being separated between two school

districts—one rendered varsity ineligible and the other forced to maintain a lengthy daily commute to preserve eligibility. Our goal was to keep our children together in our district, yet the lack of common sense exacted an extraordinary price from us. Many families in North Dakota have suffered similarly. With that I would urge you to give HB 1491 a “Do Pass.”

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Margo Knorr