

Dear Chairman and Committee I am so sorry that I could not be here to share my story in person. But I hope that what have written to be shared with you today will be enough to bring about awareness and change to the hardship process.

Growing up around my older brother Collin you could always tell he had a love for football. It wasn't just because we had grown up around the sport because of our dad, you could tell from day one that he truly had a love for it. For most people your senior year is the time when your school, your teammates, friends, and most importantly your family rally around you supporting your next big step in your career. That wasn't the case for us having two kids going to completely separate schools. Our family was divided because of a ruling made by ndhsaa.

A little over 3 years ago after spending most of our lives growing up in Minot, my parents decided it would be best for us to move to Coleharbor to be closer to my dad's farm. For many years we didn't see a lot of my dad during planting and harvest season. You could tell driving as much as he had to really took a toll on him. Especially because he was missing out on a lot of moments with us kids. When we had first moved to Coleharbor the obvious first choice was to move to Garrison school district because we lived so close. That decision soon came to a halt after the whole world shut down due to covid-19. The following year after we looked back at the transfer and decided to give it another go. For most athletes your junior year is crucial to whether or not your career will continue after high school. After going through what we had to go through as a family the one thing that kept Collin going would have been taken away from him, having to sit out of a varsity football season. This was due to the fact that Garrison went into an emergency co-ope with Velva for football. This meant that all juniors and down would not be allowed to play varsity for an entire football season. This would have ended his career. My parents were not going to make him choose between his family and the sport he loved so much.

So inevitably my parents decided to continue our education at South Prairie. As young as I was at the time sports really weren't the end goal for me. Not transferring close to home effected me in other areas. I felt like an outsider looking in to a school that I had gone to for years. I couldn't drive at the time, and my brother wasn't always able to drive me whenever I wanted to just to go visit friends on the weekends. The relationships I used to have with friends soon started to dwindle away because of this distance. Along with that my parents weren't able to attend quite a few of my extracurricular activities due to the distance. This was extremely hard for me. Not having my family there to support me at times. However because me and my brother went to the same school he was always there, supporting me. At the beginning of this year realizing for the first time in 12 years we would be going to different schools was one of the hardest things I have ever experienced. Like I said in a previous statement your senior year is the time when your school, your teammates, your friends and most importantly your family rally around you... I wasn't going to get to be there for him his senior year, going to a completely different school. My parents have had to split their time between two different schools trying to support both Collin and I.

The hardship process need to be changed. We decided at the end of the school year last year to transfer. Little did we know it wasn't as easy as just filling out a form and getting approval from all involved parties. Our hardship process soon came to halt after not hearing anything about a ruling for almost 2 weeks. My mom tried to get in contact with Mr. Fetch for many months prior to starting the hardship process. Once he finally responded we soon came to find out that the hardship process started once we attend our first day at Garrison. Meaning Collin would have had to sit out of many games of his senior season. We soon realized that he wasn't going to approve our hardship. Making Collin ineligible at both schools if we were to continue with the hardship. Ruining his senior year, and any chance at a career in football. We continued with my hardship being only a sophomore a year of ineligibility would not be the end all be all for me.

I've been at Garrison for almost a year now. Transferring to Garrison was one of the best decisions my parents could have ever made for me. Being a part of a basketball program like the one at Garrison has been truly an honor. The bonds and the experiences that I have made with my teammates and coaches brought back a love that I never thought I would have for basketball again. Having to sit on the sidelines for varsity games was difficult at first. Not getting to play and learn at a higher level was hard for me. But I soon came to realize that I

still have a lot of work to do. And I have gotten an opportunity of a life time to learn from amazing players and coaches who have taught me so much over this past year on and off the court.

My family has experienced so much over this past year. Especially my brother. The distance to school every day has put a major toll on him. South prairie has always been extremely supportive towards him and his aspirations. But that hometown since was missing ever since we had moved. You could tell that he had finally found that feeling getting to practice and build relationships with boys who lived right across the street rather than 35 plus miles away.

I will always be forever thankful for the memories and experiences that me and my brother shared at South Prairie. But, a part of me will always wish that collin and I could have shared one final year together going to the same school.

I hope that you will take what I have shared into consideration. I hope that in the future no other family will ever have to endure what we have had to go through this past year. Like I said before the hardship process needs to be changed. Not just for athletes like me and my brother, who have been separated for the first time in 12 years. Dividing our family. But, for other athletes who have already gone through so much change, needing something like their sport to keep them going.

Thank you