

Chairman Elkin, Vice-Chair Beard and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

For the record, I am David Rust, Senator from District 2.

I am sponsoring SB 2356 at the request of a constituent. During COVID schools held activities with few spectators in attendance. When the NDHSAA held its spring contests, parents were barred from attending the ND State Speech Contest. One of her children was a participant and she was forced to miss an event that meant a great deal to both her and her child.

SB 2356 is a “parental rights” bill that does two things:

1. Prohibits a school from barring a parent or guardian from attending a school-sponsored activity in which their student is participating and
2. Prohibits a private entity from doing virtually the same thing.

Since drafting the bill I’ve been asked about a legitimate exception whereby a parent may be prohibited by law or court order from being near his or her child. I believe someone will be speaking to that and I’m agreeable to an amendment addressing that.

I’ve asked the parent to provide testimony supporting this bill and she (possibly others) is here today to do that.

If you have any questions, I’ll do my best to answer them.

Mr. Chairman.