



Texas Association of Non-Public Schools

The public voice of private schools in Texas

Testimony before the Texas Senate Committee on Education—March 26, 2009

Re: SB 1831 Relating to the participation of private school students in University Interscholastic League sponsored activities.

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Madam Chairwoman,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 1831 and on behalf of accredited private schools in our state. Since 1967, the Texas Association of Non-Public Schools has partnered with TEA and the citizens of Texas to provide an environment in which the parents of school children have the highest quality schooling options available anywhere, public or private.

SB 1831 represents a step in furthering this partnership by endorsing competitive activities that include both public and private school students who attend fully accredited schools. The ability of high school students to participate in athletic and other culture-building events, whether they attend public or private school, has successful precedents throughout the country.

Support for SB 1831 is based on our desire for private schools to have the opportunity to participate with their public school neighbors when that choice serves the interest of the private school's mission and will enrich the experience of all of the schools involved. Private schools benefit in at least three ways from SB 1831, without any discernible disadvantage to the public schools and programs already competing in the UIL:

1. UIL participation potentially provides a higher level of competition for the few private schools with programs that grow beyond the normal parameters of private school competition.
2. UIL participation potentially provides the opportunity for private schools in rural or remote parts of the state to participate in more competitive activities, reducing the inordinate expense and safety risk of travel to major urban centers.
3. UIL participation provides opportunities for individual schools to partner together in the interest of their academic missions, the development of student character, and the potential sharing of resources between public and private educators.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify, and we hope that the committee will look favorably on this important enhancement to educational partnerships in Texas.