

Comment Report

HF 105

A bill for an act authorizing a receiving school district to send school vehicles into a district of residence to transport a pupil participating in open enrollment to and from school.

Subcommittee Members: Bossman-CH, Ehlert, Sorensen

Date: 02/24/2021

Time: 08:30 AM

Location: Law Library

Name: Margaret Buckton

Comment: Thank you for the opportunity to comment. The Urban Education Network and the Rural School Advocates of Iowa are both registered opposed to HF 105. This bill would allow a school district to which a student open enrolls to send buses into the district of residence to transport the student(s) without agreement from the resident district. First, we are opposed to this bill because it is an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars. Empty buses can pass each other on the way into and out of districts to transport students. Empty buses and longer routes require more bus drivers, which were in short supply before the pandemic and even more so now. Use of fuel and driving empty miles are not good for our environment. Each dollar spent on transportation is not spent on teachers, technology, curriculum, etc. Districts are currently allowed to pick up students at a bus stop just within the district boundaries, which provides a balanced approach to support open enrollment without being inefficient or wasteful. Second, districts can come to neighborly agreements if mutually beneficial. Allowing the bus in without any conversation can destroy relationships necessary for future sharing of other programs beneficial to students and both districts. It's just not neighborly to go into someone else's house without knocking. Lastly, now that the state compensates districts with high transportation costs, it changes the cost benefit analysis for some school boards and not others. If the district is above the state average in transportation costs, the state buys them down to the average. This creates an incentive for those districts to recruit students from neighboring districts by providing transportation which is subsidized by the state; this is a state incentivized inefficiency, which is not good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Thanks for the opportunity to comment. We urge you to not move this bill forward.