

Comment Report

HF 41

A bill for an act relating to the transportation to and from school of pupils participating in open enrollment. (See HF 134, HF 2278.)

Subcommittee Members: Collins-CH, Johnson, Staed

Date: 01/24/2023

Time: 08:00 AM

Location: RM 304

Name: Justin Peterson

Comment: This is a great bill, I will be open enrolling my kids to Ogden as soon as they're school age. Currently I'm 1 mile outside the district line. (9 miles from Ogden), and busses are not an option for me. My current district SE Valley is 30 miles and opposite direction to where my wife and I work. I would absolutely love to see this pass, as I know SEVERAL in the area who have to manipulate daily schedules to shuttle kids to and from school. I should also note I grew up 1 mile outside Ogden district line, and only a 1/2 mile from a grandfathered in bus stop and we were not granted bus stop permission. I attended Ogden schools and graduated Ogden schools, it was very inconvenient for us as kids to not be able to use a School bus to get to and from school.

Name: Kathryn Cross

Comment: Please pass this bill. It would help the open enrollment student. In Fraser to receive transportation to Ogden School that is actually closer than the assigned school.

Name: Joy Pals

Comment: We currently have 2 of our soon to be 3 children open enrolled in Ogden. We live at a rural Ogden address and are 1/4mi north and 1/2mi west of the Ogden School District. Our children would be on the school bus for over 2hrs a day if they were to attend our actual school district not to mention an extreme difficulty for them to be involved in after school activities because of the distance for us to drive to and from. We are only 6min from the Ogden Schools. We would definitely utilize the bus to Ogden if it was able to stop at our house. It would be a great blessing.

Name: Cassidy Shreve

Comment: Please pass this bill. I have a son that I will be open enrolling to Ogden when he is old enough to start school. I am currently in the SE Valley school district, which is very inconvenient for us. My child would be on the bus for over 2 hours a day, which isn't practical if/when he would need to attend after school activities, it would cut down on time with family, homework, etc. SE Valley is 30 miles from us where Ogden is 14 miles. We would love for our child to be able to benefit from being able to ride the bus to Ogden.

Name: Dustine Peterson

Comment: This is a great bill that needs passed. Parents open enroll for many reasons life is full of activities especially when kids get old enough to be in many school things. Parents shouldn't have to be responsible for the transportation to and from school if they live in the country, or have to rearrange their schedules to get their child/children to and from school. I chose to open enroll my kids when they both became of school age for reasons which included where my husband and I worked and also because of before

and after school care. We live 1 1/4 miles from the Ogden school district line and a half mile from a pick up/drop off that was grandfathered in of the school district where we live, they allowed the Ogden bus to go there but when I asked for the bus to come to our house, I was told it was my responsibility to get my children to school. That didn't change my mind on open enrolling my children to the other school district, again several reasons...if the district where one is open enrolled is willing to expand their bus route, then the other school district should allow it. Many families, including my grandchildren would benefit from this bill.

Name: Anna Krause

Comment: My family lives in Fraser and our two children are openenrolled Ogden schools, where my husband and his brothers graduated. This is the closest for us and allows for us to make it to activities as well. With my husband being over the road during the week for their trucking company, that leaves shuffling the kids to me and having bus transportation to and from Ogden schools would be ideal. Would definitely take away some of the stress in trying to arrange daily transportation while getting my hours in work but also still provide reasonable pick up and drop off times for the kiddos (one of the reasons we open enrolled). My kids are already familiar with using Ogden's bus services and are dropped off at a child care provider after school, but if we could get a bus to home this would shorten our day and allow us added time for schoolwork, activities, and family time in the evenings. This would greatly serve our community as there are quite a few families with similar circumstances.

Name: Joe Widmann

Comment: Yes please pass this bill ! We have an Ogden address but are in the SEV district. We are 13 miles from Ogden schools. Our 6th grade son is open enrolled in Ogden and has been since prek. With two full time working parents it would be nice to have transportation that was adequate. The last 7 years we have been adjusting our work schedules to get him to and from school. For my wife and I we would even be willing to pay fee for the services. But with that because said the district that the open enrolled student is in is already getting more money for that student then they would if that student was just a district student. So it has always confused us as to why transportation isnt offered to open enrollments. I am very happy with the education my child is receiving at Ogden. We just wish there was better solution with the transportation options being a rural area with an Ogden address.

Name: Stefanie Yearian

Comment: Please pass this bill! I am on a bus line for the my open enrolled child/ school district but because I am on the wrong side of the road, my residing school distract has declined the open enrolled school access. My residing school district does not meet the needs of my child. Please allow the option to busing if feasible for open enrolled students.Thank you so much for your time! Stefanie Yearian

Name: Moriah Perkins

Comment: Passing this bill would be amazing. I live in Fraser and currently have one child open enrolled. In a few years I will have a second child joining my daughter. Having transportation as an option would make working a lot easier and would open up my choices. Right now my options are based on if the start time of school over laps with the start time of work. I know that having school transportation options for Fraser would also increase the likelihood that as time goes on more people with kids might actually be more interested in living in Fraser. It would only benefit our families and our town. Please consider passing this!

Name: Stephanie Vaughn

Comment: I open enrolled my oldest daughter to Ogden community school at the beginning of the school year. Previously she went to Southeast valley but due to transportation from Fraser to Dayton for her and her younger sister (who also attended daycare there) she was unable to take partake in activities with out me missing work due to

travel time. Most games were based out of Gowrie which is quite the drive considering we reside in Fraser. It would be nice to have transportation from Fraser to Ogden considering most of the kids within the area are open enrolled to Ogden and it would benefit many families with in our community.

Name: Jessica Hicks

Comment: We live within 2 miles of the Ogden Community School District border, but we're in the SE Valley school district that is around 30 miles in the opposite direction. My kids have always attended Ogden since it was so close, and I worked in Ames. It did not make sense to be so far away from the school and would have inhibited my ability to get my kids to activities. While my kids are now getting old enough to drive, I have spent years trying to figure out transportation and after school care. I have been fortunate to always be able to work it out, but I feel for other families in this situation that may not have the same experience. Getting our kids to a local public school should not cause such undue burden on working families in our rural state.

Name: Katie King

Comment: My husband and I along with our two kids live in Fraser. Last year we tried along with neighbors to get our district rezoned so we could join with Ogden. We currently would have to have our kids on the bus for roughly an hour + one way. This option would allow Ogden to be able to make life much easier for a lot of families! Thanks for taking the time to listen to our concerns.

Name: Megan Ulrich

Comment: We live in the country south of Ogden (Ogden address) and just happen to be right on the corner of 3 school districts. (In Perry district, 1 mile south of Ogden district, 1/2 mile west of WoodwardGranger district) While our residing district is just a couple of miles closer to us, we chose Ogden schools for their high performance and smaller class sizes. Its wonderful that Iowa offers us a school choice through open enrollment, but, we wish busing was an option. It would be an amazing help to our family if this bill is passed!

Name: Rachel Duncan

Comment: There are many reasons why House File 41 should be made into law. The one that matters most to me is that my children have the best opportunities available to them. A quick Google search showed me there is research showing students with longer commutes sleep and exercise less. The research showed a 10 minute commuter would have the opportunity to sleep 26 minutes more than the 30 minute commuter. So that would likely compute to an hour less of sleep for my children. Research also shows that the time devoted to exercising also takes a toll. Both of these healthy habits are essential to a child. Family is essential to a childs development as well. Im not going to Google search that but we all know the importance of family. With added commute time, family time suffers. Opportunities such as music, art, athletics are inhibited. With added commute time everything is affected. TIME is such a gift and to waste it sitting on a bus because the adults cant do what is best for a child is the saddest part. I hope you will make this HS41 a law. I would also argue to have receiving districts be able to obtain/expect money from the resident district. If a child has special needs and open enrolls; the resident district is expected to pay for the additional costs associated with this student. Why should our general education students be different for just wanting to be transported to/from school?Southeast Valley School District (SEV) is 30.8 miles from our home. Just traveling there in my personal car takes 36 minutes. My 2 children would spend more than 2 hours each day traveling to and from school when the roads are good and all the stops go smoothly. We have chosen to open enroll our children to Ogden. Ogden is just 10.4 miles away. This is only a 16 minute drive. We live just 8/10 of a mile away from the district line8/10s of a mile, yet we are not eligible to have our children picked up on

the school bus. Over 12 years ago, a group of our neighbors, family and friends appealed to SEV to allow us to access transportation from the Ogden District where we currently open enroll. The board/superintendent all but laughed in our face. We open enrolled anyway. In March 2022, a group of neighbors, family and friends voted No to consolidation with the SEV because there was a chance we could get bussing for our children. We had the support of many but not enough. We had the support of the Ogden district, Ogden superintendent and Ogden school board but without money to support the bus routes their hands were/are tied. My neighbors, family and friends are writing on this page and attending today to show that we want the best for our children. Our children are the FUTURE of Iowa and the country! These children will be valuable citizens in the near future and could possibly be sitting right where you are deciding the fate of Iowa families who have cared enough to try. We hope you will pass HS41. Thank you, Rachel Duncan

Name: Whitney Miller

Comment: Passing this bill would be beneficial for so many families. Right now I am preparing to register my soon to be 4 year old daughter in Ogden for preschool. After that she will be open enrolled in Ogden Schools. It is 12 minutes from home. I can't see in 2 years putting my 5 year old child on a bus before 7am to go to school for 8 hours and then another bus ride for over an hour. Having transportation to school closer to home means she will be bussed for less than that time. Young minds need sleep to be able to learn, but getting up before the sun doesn't help their growing minds because they have to be on a bus. After being on a bus for over 2 hours, school for 8 there is not much time left for home life. We as adults have a work/life balance, why do our children not deserve that? My tax dollars are going to a different district than my child will attend school in, they say the funding follows the student when it comes to transportation but right now there isn't that option, so still my tax dollars aren't where they should be. During inclement weather my child will be an hour away if attending the district where we are supposed to attend, while I know schools make the decisions fairly quickly when it comes to inclement weather, there are still risks and things can change at the drop of a hat. Please take this into consideration and see that so many families are struggling right now to get their children to school and some face risks of losing employment due to needing to rearrange work schedules to accommodate their children going to school.

Name: Kelly Merritt

Comment: As a member of the Ogden Community School Board, I whole heartedly support this proposed legislation. While I do understand the reasons behind requiring permission from the home district, I would submit to you that those rules prevent us from doing what is best for kids. We have many, many students that are a stones throw from our district that we are unable to transport! At one time, we had kids walking to a bus stop in order to be able to catch a bus to Ogden. Surely we all agree that children walking along the highway is not in their best interests. Please consider what is best for students and consider passing this bill!

Name: Kaylee Uthe

Comment: Passing this bill would mean the world to my husband and I. We had to open enroll our son to Ogden due to being in the SE Valley school district, only being not even approximately a mile north from the Ogden school district line. Our son would be on the bus for approximately 2 hours a day, which would cut down on time with family, homework, etc. also very hard for our family when it came to after school activity or sports, especially for my husband and I to make/support our son as we would want to. SE Valley is approximately 30 miles from us as to where Ogden is 14 miles. With my husband and I working in Boone and Ames, Ogden is the best fit for our family, not to mention we both went through Ogden School District. We would love for our child to be able to benefit from being able to ride the bus to Ogden and know we don't have to worry about transportation. Please think of all the families that your decision will affect today and pass this bill for us all!

Name: Amanda Williams

Comment: I feel that this bill is very important not only as a parent who open enrolls but for many who open enroll due to the continued consolidation of school districts. There are many children who are riding a bus for an extended amount of time because parents have no other choice than to send their children to the schools that are in their school district due to transportation. I am one of the few fortunate ones who has had family available to help with transportation to and from school and the designated bus stop that is closest to our home. We are less than a mile from the Ogden School District line and I work in Ames so it has only made sense to send my son to Ogden. I understand that it is a choice to open enroll and it is our responsibility to make it work but for some sending our children to a school that is so far away is stressful and unneeded. There needs to be better options for transportation if we are going to continue to see the school districts get larger.

Name: Juli Krause

Comment: Having a chance to get bus services to our rural area would greatly effect so many families now and later in our area. Most of my children are grown, but I would've given my right leg to have had bus services in our area that got us directly to our closest school where my younge 4t is still open enrolled. He will be driving soon but having bus services would be a great option if needed. I also look at a medical emergency aspect. If something happens to my son where he's open enrolled, I'm 10 mins away from him instead of 40 mins away from SE. In a medical emergency that's crucial. If parents have to rely on bussing services for their children, that is a complication they'd have to endure.

Name: Margaret Buckton

Comment: Both the Rural School Advocates of Iowa and the Urban Education Network are registered opposedto HF 9. The current system allows districts to work together in agreeing when transportationservices are appropriate, but local school boards should have jurisdiction over their district and territory. Both organizations are also concerned about districts withresources being able to market to certain neighborhoods in neighboring districts and providing transportation that the resident district can not afford to provide.Since the state provides transportationreimbursement to get all districts to the state average transportationcost per pupil, some districts receivingreimbursements will basically have the state reimburse their costs for this transportation. If it happens in more than justa few districts, the impact of increasing any transportationcosts will bid up the cost per pupil and wind up reducing the amount of reimbursement for all districts above the state average.There already is a mechanism for lower income families to receive transportation support. The resident district is required to provide transportation for any families with annual income below 200% of the federal poverty level. The resident district has the authority to determine the transportationmethod, either allowing the receiving district to pick up the students, agreeing to transport the student with resident district buses, or providing reimbursement to the parents if they are required to transport. This cost is then subtracted from the resident district tuition paid to the receiving district. Empty buses from neighboring districts passing each other to pick up each other's students is seen by citizens and taxpayers as inefficient use of resources which it is. Part of the goal of Iowa's finance system is to maximize efficiency. This bill, although well intentioned, doesn't do that.