

Submitter:

Rich Linwood

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Education

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB3807

Hello. My name is Rich Linwood and I am a disabled Navy Vet who volunteered and assisted with the David Douglas 2024 football team. During that time I witnessed several instances of racism directed towards the Staff, players, and fans. I have a son who was on the team and was impacted directly by racial slurs on several occasions from several different teams during the season. It was difficult to watch young men have to endure an athletic event where they should be playing for fun and sportsmanship instead of having to endure psychological warfare. The officials were notified and they repeatedly advised the coaching staff they either didn't hear the racial slur or couldn't tell which player said it. The coaching staff conducted themselves phenomenally, keeping the impacted young men and the entire team together without there being any issues from the David Douglas staff or team. This issue runs deep. Racism is being experienced at all levels of athletics at this point. Our first encounter was when our son was in the 8th grade, 2 years ago during an middle school football game. The players notified the coaching staff as well as parents that the players on the opposing team were calling the African American players derogatory names. Players who were not African American were also targeted as they went to the aid of their teammates who were visibly shaken up on the field. There was an investigation conducted which resulted in David Douglas now reading a player and parent code of conduct and ethics prior to each event. Parents have experienced racism visiting opposing teams while coaches and players have endured monkey noises and chants. Players need to be protected from verbal assaults' and racial slurs when engaged in sporting events. I have witnessed coaches calling timeouts to stop a game to address racism during the game as the officials seem to be out of touch with what is happening or what is going on, or just simply allowing it to happen. Standing on the sidelines, I've heard players on the field yelling out racial slurs standing right next to officials and the officials don't say anything to any of the players. I as well as the rest of the coaches and parents are left picking up each player and telling them they are strong and smart and they do matter. As a parent, you don't like to see your child hurt in any kind of way. Looking your child in the eyes after they have been defeated in a sporting event, you know the hurt they feel. Looking at your child in the eyes after they have lost a sporting event and endured a game where they had to be better than the rest and not lose their cool, not sink to the opposing teams players yelling obnoxious racial slurs is a feeling like no other. In a world where we are still dealing with race even after the Civil Rights Act is appalling. Being born in the south, I have witnessed racism at it's worst, and I must say that this past football season was just as bad. Players need to be able to play whatever sport they are engaged in without fear. They need to be

protected. Please approve and sign this measure to protect the players now and in the future.