

Angelique McDonald

From: Sen. Karin Housley
Sent: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:24 AM
To: Angelique McDonald
Subject: FW: Thank you

From: Tonia Nelson <toniaanelson@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 1, 2021 9:59 PM
To: Sen. Karin Housley <Sen.Karin.Housley@senate.mn>
Subject: Thank you

Senator Housley,

I saw the letter you sent to Governor Walz regarding the Hill-Murray situation and I want to thank you for advocating for our youth! There are many teams across the state, like Hill-Murray, who have had their seasons ended unnecessarily and the inconsistency regarding COVID protocol is especially frustrating for our children.

As you are likely aware, schools currently have flexibility in deciding how long their students need to be quarantined following a COVID exposure. Schools have the option of quarantining their students for 7 days (with a negative COVID test after 5 days), 10 days (no test) or 14 days (no test). The school my children attend chooses to quarantine students for 14 days, period. I have two boys, a junior who has committed to Arizona for baseball and a senior who will attend Bethel to play football and baseball. The last playoff game my boys (along with their teammates) have played in was over a year ago as both their football and basketball seasons ended due to COVID protocol. As you can imagine, having their seasons ended in this fashion was difficult and made them feel helpless as their dreams and goals they set for themselves ended abruptly and through no fault of their own (and no fault of the individuals that tested positive either). What has been particularly frustrating and devastating though, is while my completely HEALTHY children (no symptoms and negative COVID results) were not allowed to return to school for 14 days, some of their friends in other districts, under the exact same circumstances, returned to school and competition after 7 or 10 days. For basketball, kids from the team that exposed us to COVID returned to school in 7 days while our team was out 14 days.....the only difference being that their administration follows the guidance differently. The difference between a 7 and 14 day quarantine is significant especially for students who want to be in school, who have already endured multiple quarantines (while remaining HEALTHY) and especially for our seniors who want nothing more than to be in school and participate in the activities they love for the last time with their classmates. Even though I strongly disagree with the option the administration in our district has chosen to follow, I also know they are good people who want the best for their students and their preference would be that the state (Governor/MDH/MSHSL) would take the ambiguity out of the guidance as well. In addition to the varying quarantine lengths, schools have a lot of flexibility in determining what constitutes "close contact". Schools that are sports-forward interpret the "close contact" guidance very differently which puts the athletes in our district at a disadvantage (although I applaud the schools who are working hard to keep their kids in school).

I would ask that you please advocate for our HEALTHY children to no longer be quarantined. If children are sick they need to stay home from school; if they are not sick, they need to be in school. Over the course of the last year the circumstances around COVID have drastically changed and the state and schools need to be changing as well. Circumstances that have changed in the last year: 1) we have learned that the overwhelming majority children (and adults) have the ability to recover from his disease without complications 2) mental health issues in children and physical abuse to children have skyrocketed in the last year 3) school personal have now had the opportunity to be fully vaccinated 4) asymptomatic individuals aren't spreaders of COVID. However, if the state continues to require quarantines for HEALTHY children, I would also ask that you please seek clarification on the rules so that students (and athletes) across the state are treated fairly.

As we now approach the spring athletic season, I hope my children and children all across the state would have the opportunity to play and compete without having to worry about their season ending as any given notice. Please continue fighting for our kids!!

Sincerely,

Tonia Finstrom

