The Case Against Homeschool Participation in UIL Athletics

Equity, Accountability, and Oversight

- **Lack of Regulatory Oversight:** Texas homeschool settings are not regulated by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Unlike public schools, they are not subject to the same instructional standards, teacher qualifications, or attendance requirements. This creates an uneven playing field in academic and athletic eligibility.
- **Freedom from Regulation ≠ Access to Public Benefits:** Homeschool families have chosen an educational path that grants them freedom from government regulation. With that choice comes the waiver of access to the free and full services provided by public schools—including extracurricular and athletic programs.
- **No Authority = No Accountability:** Public school administrators and coaches have no oversight or authority over a homeschool student's academic standing, attendance, or behavioral conduct. The proposed legislation handcuffs school leaders from verifying compliance with UIL rules, opening schools to risk of violations, penalties, or suspension from competition.

Academic Eligibility Concerns

- **No Certified Instruction or Verified Curriculum:** Unlike public school students, homeschool students are not required to be taught by certified educators or use state-approved curriculum. This makes verification of academic progress subjective and inconsistent.
- **No Measurable Academic Standards:** Public school students are held to TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) standards and participate in state-mandated assessments. There is no equivalent benchmark for homeschool students, making fair and transparent eligibility decisions impossible.
- **Uneven Playing Field:** Homeschool students are not bound by minimum instructional time, grade reporting deadlines, or state testing requirements—all of which could directly impact a student-athlete's eligibility in UIL programs.

Athletic Program Integrity

- **Inconsistent Code of Conduct Enforcement:** Coaches use athletic participation as a tool to reinforce discipline, character, and academic motivation. Homeschool students are only held to athletic participation rules—not campus-wide codes of conduct. This undermines team unity, fairness, and the authority of educators to manage group behavior.

- **Unfair Competitive Advantage:** Without the same limits on instructional time or school-day obligations, homeschool students may have more flexibility to train, practice, or specialize—giving them an unfair advantage over enrolled students.
- **Disrupts Team Culture:** UIL activities are extensions of the public school educational mission. Students learn teamwork, responsibility, and leadership in a school-wide context. Allowing students who are not part of the daily school environment to participate erodes this culture.

Summary Message

Homeschool participation in UIL activities threatens to erode the fairness, integrity, and educational purpose of extracurricular programs. While respecting the rights of parents to choose alternative education, public school athletic programs must be governed by consistent standards, equitable oversight, and a shared commitment to educational accountability. Without enrollment, there should be no eligibility.

Date Issued 6/9/2025