The New York State School Board Association opposes the above referenced legislation and urges its rejection by the legislature.

This legislation would authorize boards of education to permit home-schooled students to participate in district interscholastic activities. Home-schooled students are currently prohibited from participating in public school run interscholastic sports.

By authorizing school districts to allow home-schooled students to participate in interscholastic sports, this legislation would effectively pit one group of parents against another, and put the school district in an unfavorable position in which either decision it would make could lead to unhappy community members on either side of the issue. School districts are not asking for this authority; rather it is being thrust upon them against their will.

Additionally, this legislation would allow parents to selectively opt in to certain activities. Extracurricular activities are a part of the school continuum and districts generally have standards that deal with a wide range of issues including academic requirements, attendance and discipline to participate in interscholastic activities. Despite the requirements that the bill imposes before a home-schooled student may participate in interscholastic activities, the legislation diminishes the importance of regular public school attendance and academic criteria before being allowed to participate in certain activities. As a result, a unique set of standards would need to be created for home-schooled kids who are not subject to the attendance policies, code of conduct or academic rigor that public school students must comply with in order to participate in sports. Participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege, not a right, and this bill seeks to reverse that principle.

For the reasons stated above, NYSSBA opposes this legislation and urges your negative vote. For additional information please contact NYSSBA Governmental Relations at 518-783-0200.