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## Chairman Thiesfeldt and members of the Assembly Committee on Education

I am the Executive Director of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) and I am writing on behalf of Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA) members in opposition to AB 779. Our organization represents and supports over 220 members with 155 rural school districts, several CESAs, technical colleges, universities, businesses and individual members.

After conferring with our WiRSA members our organization will be registering in opposition of the AB 779. Our members have numerous concerns with this bill and how it could impact their enforcement of School and WIAA eligibility requirements for participation in WIAA sports and other school co-curricular activities. Here are some of the comments and concerns from our members:

* Daily attendance and accountability that our public-school students must meet each day, go unchecked with these students.
* The language of this Bill does NOT require they be full time students.
* This bill prohibits the oversight and determination of academic progress that is what “every other student” must contend with.
* That this Bill does not explicitly require enrollment in a Wisconsin based virtual school is troubling as a taxpayer.
* This would create a bigger burden for taxpayers who are sending dollars out of their district for academics but now need to maintain resources for students who do not attend their district to support these activities(homeschool students do not send dollars out of the district so not the same burden).
* Choice in education does not need to be out of district, our district like many others has many choices within the district and that is often overlooked.
* Over the years, a number of studies have documented dismal outcomes in virtual schools, including low course completion rates and higher than average school dropout rates.
* Allowing students that are virtual students athletic eligibility in the district they reside takes away opportunities from full time enrolled students.
* State reimbursement is to full time enrolled students in your district. This student brings little to no revenue into the home district they would be participating in.
* Costs associated with athletic programs/ does the funding left with the resident district cover these costs - I would argue that it does not even offset the cost of managing open-enrollment of many districts.
* Attendance - how is attendance defined for the student to be eligible to practice and compete/ how does the resident school practically track attendance
* I often hear students say that they want to "go online" for their education, somehow thinking it is easier or using it as a way to avoid attending school. I can envision students taking advantage of this in ways that are not intended.

In conclusion, AB 779 may cause divisiveness in a community/district and be unmanageable as well as costly to school districts. With this and the concerns above in mind, we ask that you oppose AB 779.

Thank you for your time and taking my written testimony into consideration,

Kim Kaukl

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 *Strong Schools, Strong Communities*