

March 19, 2015

Senate District 30

Big Lake  
Elk River  
Otsego  
Albertville  
St. Michael  
Hanover

89th  
Legislature

## Senator Mary Kiffmeyer



My bill to add National Guard members who are located in or reside in Minnesota to qualify for higher education scholarships was heard in the Higher Education Committee on Tuesday. Also testifying in support of the bill was Don Kerr, Executive Director of the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs.

## WEEK 11 2015 SESSION

WORK HARD — DO THE RIGHT THING — EXPECT THE BEST... WITH INTEGRITY



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### Reinforcing Our Children's Safety and Privacy at School

Last week, Senate Republicans introduced the "Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act" to address serious concerns regarding a controversial new policy from the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

In December, the MSHSL issued a new ruling allowing transgender students to play on a sports team other than the team of the student's biological sex. In effect, it allows male students who identify as female to play on girls sports teams.

The ruling was met with resistance from parents and families who were worried about what effect it would have on locker room and shower situations, and how the ruling would impact private and nonpublic schools. Before the final vote on the policy, the MSHSL was presented with a petition of 6,000 names opposing the changes, but the Board proceeded to adopt the plan anyway.

In addition to parent apprehension, the ruling also appears to be in conflict with state law. (cont.)



Listen to my weekly Senate update clips:

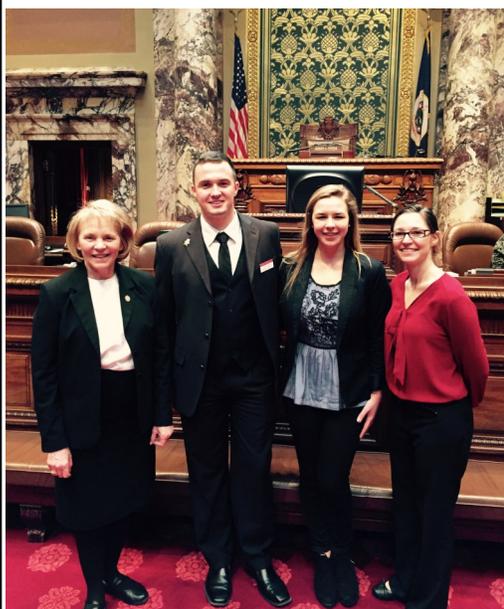
<https://soundcloud.com/sen-mary-kiffmeyer>

## Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act (cont.)

I am a co-author to the “Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act,” [SF 1543](#), that clarifies state law and sends a message to parents that we are listening to their concerns. It is a commonsense bill that protects students’ basic safety and privacy rights by codifying what high schools are already doing. It simply defines who is eligible to participate on school sports teams and requires that schools maintain facilities like bathrooms and locker rooms that are separated based on biological sex. Schools will be able to continue to meet the needs of individual students who are uncomfortable using the facility that corresponds with their biological sex by offering access to a private facility.

I wanted to be a co-author of this bill because it is clear Minnesota families are unhappy with the MSHSL decision. A recent statewide poll from Public Opinion Strategies showed only 29 percent of respondents supported the MSHSL ruling, while 76 percent support the changes in our bill. As mother and a grandmother, I share your concerns about the policy. The “Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act” addresses the needs of transgender students while continuing to protect every student’s safety and privacy.

The bill has been referred to the Education committee but has yet to receive a hearing.



I enjoyed meeting with students from the University of Minnesota Duluth for their Day at the Capitol.

Pictured are Nathan Ernst of Big Lake, Rose Lindquist, and Kallie Alexandrou.

## Studying Concurrent Enrollment Programs

My bill to establish a work group to study concurrent enrollment programs, [SF 430](#), was heard in the Higher Education and Workforce Development Committee. This working group would review the concurrent enrollment courses being offered in high schools with their counterparts at a postsecondary institution.

The bill’s goal is to make sure that students taking these advanced courses while in high school are in fact receiving the same course, the same syllabus, and the same exams that are being offered in the postsecondary counterpart.

This bill is critical because so many of our students are enrolled in these courses and we need to make sure that they are not getting short-changed. Concurrent enrollment courses are not simply college preparation courses; they are designed to provide an actual college-level course taught by college professors to students who are still in high school. The incentives for students to take these courses include receiving college credit and getting a rigorous college-level course all without having to leave the high school.

The bill was previously heard in the Education Committee but was referred to the Higher Education Committee. There, I offered an author’s amendment that the committee adopted. Members from St. Cloud State University as well as the Minnesota School Boards Association testified on the bill. The committee pass the amended bill and it was referred to the Committee of State and Local Government.

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State Senator Mary Kiffmeyer encourages and appreciates constituent input, and can be reached at [651-296-5655](tel:651-296-5655), by mail at 123 State Office Building, 100 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55155, or via email at [sen.mary.kiffmeyer@senate.mn](mailto:sen.mary.kiffmeyer@senate.mn)