

- Special to the Leader & Times Liberal High School has come up on the short end of the stick more than once with the Kansas State High School Athletics Association. The most recent was a few years back when Liberal's top ranked soccer team was told they would have to travel to play their first round playoff game, despite earning homefield advantage.

Liberal isn't the only school in the state who has had to deal with bad decisions from this organization. It is wide spread across the state. The Kansas House of Representatives decided to take action as they debated a bill (HB 2197) on Tuesday that will add four parents to the association's executive board. There will be one parent from each congressional district appointed by the Governor, so each area of the state will be represented.

State Representative Reid Petty helped push the bill out of Federal & State Committee which he sits on, and then spoke on the House floor to let his fellow House members know of experiences that Liberal has had with the association and encouraged a 'yes' vote on the bill.

"It isn't just my district that has been harmed by the Kansas State High School Athletics Association," Petty said. "It is many of our student athletes who are put at a distinct disadvantage. The states that surround us are allowed to have spring football practice for a week for those who wish to participate. Other states around us have longer baseball seasons. There are many other similar restrictions. Our student athletes aren't getting the same opportunities that kids in Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Nebraska and Colorado are getting and the results are showing. Kansas kids aren't being recruited by colleges nearly as much to play athletics. I strongly support this bill because it provides more input and will provide more of a balance when decisions are made concerning high school athletics,"

The bill passed the House on final action on Tuesday night 69-53, and will now advance on to the Senate.