

To Senator Jason Rarick,

I am asking for your support on the Higher Education Committee hearing about Minnesota Gopher sports that were cut, tentatively scheduled for Feb. 15.

My son is a freshman on the Gopher cross country and track teams, and I am amazed at the positive benefits this is facilitating in his life.

I see you are from Pine City, I remember some athletes from Pine City were at the state track meet a couple of years ago and we learned about the town from some of the parents in the stands. Just like those athletes were ambassadors for your town, we feel our son is an ambassador for all small towns in Minnesota when he runs for the Gophers.

I have one statistic for you: track and field is the most popular sport in Minnesota, in that there are more track athletes in Minnesota high schools than in any other sport. Because this is a cornerstone of Minnesota sports, it was a shocking blow to the entire state when the University of Minnesota said they were going to cut men's track. Although they brought back outdoor track, the team is still suffering from not having indoor track.

The reasons that the University gave for cutting sports have all fallen through. Your support to bring this subject out in the open on Feb. 15 would do a lot for our athletes who still do not understand why their sport was cut.

Thank you,

Mark Anderson