

March 17, 2010

Education Committee

Respectfully submitted by:  
Carrie Kramer, Brain Injury Services Director  
Brain Injury Association of Connecticut

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Members of the Education Committee. My name is Carrie Kramer. I provide you this testimony in favor of ***RSB 456: An Act Concerning Student Athletes and Concussions*** as the Director of Brain Injury Services at the Brain Injury Association of Connecticut (BIAC), a member of the Connecticut Concussion Task Force (CCTF), the daughter of a brain injury survivor AND the mother of three active sports-minded boys.

I am here today to let you know that there is, in fact, a cure for brain injury — but only one cure, and it is, *prevention*. That is why passage of this legislation is so critical for the future safety and well-being of our Connecticut youth.

Today you will hear many important, well-established facts and statistics from my colleagues regarding concussions. What you also need to hear, however, is less difficult to quantify. It's the heartbreak, frustration, fear and anger in the voices of the countless parents I speak to about what their children have endured due to the lack of proper medical assessment and treatment of concussion when it first occurs in a game or practice. They contact BIAC because we are the only statewide organization in Connecticut that provides information, resources and support to individuals with brain injuries, their families, caregivers and the professionals who serve them. What we cannot do is turn back the clock.

Too often, by the time a parent reaches us, his or her child has lingering symptoms already affecting all areas of that child's life — and theirs. Factor in the stigma that tends to accompany such injuries, as well as the alienation that follows, and a terrible situation grows even worse. Saddest of all is the fact that many of the complications and challenges we deal with at BIAC

every day could have been prevented had the parents or coaches involved known how to recognize and respond properly to concussion injuries when they first occur. By enacting this critical legislation, you can change this.

Concussions can be very dangerous and repeated concussions can be life-threatening. By making proper diagnosis and management of recreational- and sports-related concussions more likely, this legislation will go a long way toward ensuring that treatable concussions no longer evolve unnecessarily into serious long-term disability, coma, or death.

I urge you to pass *RSB 456: An Act Concerning Student Athletes and Concussions* and I thank you in advance on behalf of all those impacted by brain injury.