

Ms. Theresa Lerner
30 Osage Rd.
West Hartford, CT 06117

March 17, 2010

Dear Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischmann and all members of the Education Committee,

My name is Theresa Lerner of 30 Osage Rd, West Hartford, CT. I am writing to express my support of S.B. 456, An Act Concerning Student Athletes and Concussions. I am the mother of three high school and college athletes. I am also currently a soccer goalie in the West Hartford Women's Soccer league and my husband participates in an adult summer lacrosse league. Sports participation is a big part of our lives.

I have two sons who attend Hall High School in West Hartford and who are involved in team sports, in particular, football, wrestling, hockey and lacrosse. During the course of this year's football and hockey seasons, each son sustained a concussion. My football player was head tackled in the first game of the season, and my hockey player was checked from behind into the boards. In both instances, the athletic trainer was the individual who identified the injury and assessed ability for continued play. My football player did not realize he was injured. Due to her professional nature and designation, the athletic trainer pulled Billy from the lineup. Billy's symptoms included sensitivity to loud noises, some dizziness, and a headache for a few days and he was removed from play for three weeks. Our school system utilizes the ImPACT concussion assessment system. Billy had a baseline report on file. After analysis of data obtained through the ImPACT exam, Billy received clearance from the athletic trainer and our pediatrician and town physician. When Trey sustained his hockey concussion, the athletic trainer also witnessed the injury and assessed Trey for continued play. Trey also wanted to continue play, but the athletic trainer had observed the "hit" and determined that further assessment was necessary. Head injuries, or any Traumatic Brain Injury, are not something that can be dealt with lightly. Unlike a broken finger or arm, brain injuries can affect all aspects of life. Given the age of high school athletes, it is imperative that proper protocol be established and maintained, even if it feels initially upsetting to the athlete or parent. Measurable assessments, such as the ImPACT exam, need to be in place to eliminate that subjective call when telling an athlete that he or she cannot participate for a period of time.

I am pleased with the protocol utilized by my school system and other professionals. But I know that every town does not have such stringent guidelines. Over time, I have been at a few all-day wrestling tournaments in which there was not a designated athletic trainer on duty. I believe the passage of S.B. 456, An Act Concerning Student Athletes and Concussions will benefit the athlete, the school systems, and all persons involved.

Thank you,

Theresa Lerner