



## CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, INC.

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### Testimony Regarding Only Section 1 & 2

#### Bill No. 5354 – AN ACT CONCERNING ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

My name is Fred Balsamo and I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors, which services more than 125,000 student-athletes and 10,000 coaches from 184 High Schools and 151 Middle Schools in Connecticut.

The position of Athletic Director exists in every school in Connecticut that provides an athletic program and yet there is absolutely no definition of the position in any state statute. The athletic directors in Connecticut have been tremendously impacted by significant legislation over the past few years and as a result the role of the athletic director has increased considerably. The athletic director has to ensure that every coach in their program possesses a coaching permit required by law and that those permits are maintained by ongoing CEU's. Most athletic directors attend specific professional development training in order to provide those CEU's to their own staff at no cost.

In 2010, legislation was passed that required the education of coaches specific to concussions and the recognition of such injuries. In 2005, legislation was enacted requiring ALL coaches to be evaluated. Other issues such as hazing and bullying, harassment, and the use of electronic and social media have also increased the duties of the athletic director position.

In addition, each athletic director has to mediate the concerns of parents who may not agree with decisions of the coaches. Athletic directors must provide ongoing efforts to ensure that good sportsmanship and fair play are being learned and that a safe and healthy environment exists for each and every student athlete. The requirements placed upon the athletic director position are too many to list, but I can assure you their plates are full and more and more is asked of them each day.

Lastly, the position of athletic director has been identified as important member of the school's administrative team and has been upgraded on a national level. Fully accredited course work and an official certification program have helped to define the position. Many of our Connecticut athletic directors have completed this course work and recognize the importance and valuable assistance it provides them in doing their job.

Because this position has such a direct impact on student safety, it should not only be defined in the state statutes but the qualifications should be set at a much higher standard than a mere coaching permit. I would like to suggest an amendment to Bill 5354 as it is currently written to read as follows:

**In Line 17** after "statutes" delete ", (2)" and add "and "

**In Line 18-20** delete "an athletic administrator permit issued by the State Board of education, pursuant to section 2 of this act." And add " (2) a Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) certificate from the National Interscholastic

Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA), or the equivalent, from another program with full registration from the National Certification Commission, as approved by the State Department of Education.

**In Line 25** - delete "." and add "or a person may hold a Certified Master Athletic Administrator (CMAA) certificate from the NIAAA, or the equivalent, from another program with full registration from the National Certification Commission, as approved by the State Board of Education."

**In Lines 26-29** – Delete lines 26-29 and replace with (d) "Any person who holds the position of director of athletics on or before July 1, 2012 shall not be subject to the provisions of this section"

I urge you to support Bill No. 5354 with our suggested amendment and help Connecticut define and elevate the qualifications' of the Athletic Directors position.

Sincerely,

Fred Balsamo, CMAA

CAAD Executive Director