



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF ATHLETIC DIRECTORS, INC.

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February 15, 2013

Supportive Testimony Regarding:

House Bill 6383 - AN ACT CONCERNING HIRING STANDARDS FOR ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

My name is Fred Balsamo, Executive Director for the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD), which represents the athletic directors in 184 high schools and 170 middle school athletic programs across the state.

The role and responsibilities of athletic directors are very complex. Ensuring compliance with CIAC rules and regulations, coordinating sport team schedules and transportation, supervising and evaluating coaches and ensuring their requirements are met, adhering to the NCAA recruiting standards for college bound athletes, monitoring equipment and facilities to make sure they are safe for athletic play, and ensuring that all of these needs are met to safeguard the well-being of the students are all part of the day-to-day duties of the athletic director. However, despite all these responsibilities, there is no mention of the position of "athletic director" in any of the state statutes.

Several years ago, the legislature defined "athletic coach", created coaching permit requirements and a permit renewal process, and mandated ongoing education, which includes maintaining first aid and CPR certification and taking concussion education. The legislature also created an evaluation process of coaches and termination hearing procedures, and further mandated education on hazing, bullying and harassment, blood borne pathogens, MRSA, and gender identity. It has even passed legislation on the use of organic fertilizers on school playing fields. The responsibility for implementing and monitoring all of these mandates very often falls upon the shoulders of the athletic director.

We commend the committee on recognizing the magnitude of Athletic Director position and applaud the language set forth in House Bill 6383 which will define "athletic director" and set standards as to the qualifications needed to hold this position. It will provide student safety and diminish liability exposure to schools districts. However, there is additional language that is needed to protect those individuals currently in the position who have been grandfathered in previous years. They should be protected unless they decide to move to another district.

I would like to suggest the following be added to section 1(b) & 1(c):

"Any person who currently holds the appropriate credentials and serves in the position of Athletic director prior to July 1, 2013 shall not be subject to the provisions of this section unless they move to a new school district."

This additional wording will guarantee that no one would lose his/her position as a result of the legislation and insure there would not be any economic mandates or hardships for school systems.

Sincerely,

Fred Balsamo

Fred Balsamo, CMAA, Executive Director
Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors