

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 966:
An Act Establishing A Pilot Program To Study Injury Rates In School Athletic Programs
Public Health Committee - March, 15, 2013

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony to you today in support of Senate Bill 966: An Act Establishing A Pilot Program To Study Injury Rates In School Athletic Programs

I have worked with many entities, organizations, and associations in Connecticut, who have worked diligently and collaboratively over the past years to address the appropriate needs to protect our young student-athletes. Recently, a collaborative effort led to successful “return to play” concussion legislation (Public Act 10-62), we have demonstrated that the football and soccer high school coaches have found the education useful. They, in fact, believe it makes their jobs easier. However, more needs to be done and Senate Bill 966 is the appropriate first step by putting in place the appropriate entities to study and report on incidence of concussions and injuries in Connecticut at the high school level over a two year period. Though expansion to the youth level sports would be ideal and in the future needed, currently the system is available at the high school level. The future expansion to look at other school age children and return to play from concussion that are not tied to high school sporting events and activities should be considered.

As has been documented to this committee in the past, more than 2 million sports related injuries occur at the high school level each year leading to more than 500,000 physician visits and 30,000 hospitalizations of high school age children. It is estimated that up to 50% of these injuries may be preventable or at least have the long-term consequences lessened if tracking and reporting occurred. Information specific to injuries of high school student-athletes in Connecticut is not available and no program exists to track or provide surveillance of injuries in this age cohort. Due to the lack of a data collecting process, both physicians and those involved in these sports at a regulatory level cannot make fully educated decisions regarding interventions or rule changes to protect the health and safety of our student athletes in Connecticut.

I believe Senate Bill 966 is vital to the health and safety of the children of the state of Connecticut. Senate Bill 966 is a prudent step in the protection of our athletes. Please support Senate Bill 966.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Trojian, MD FACSM

Associate Professor of Family Medicine and Orthopaedic Surgery

Director of Injury Prevention and Sports Outreach Programs - NEMSI

Sports Medicine Fellowship Director University of Connecticut Health Center

Sports Medicine Advisor to Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference

Member of the Connecticut Concussion Task Force