

TOWN OF STAFFORD
DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS AND RECREATION
145 ORCUTTVILLE ROAD, STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT 06076

February 25, 2014

Testimony Regarding: **H.B 5113 - AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS.**

My name is Damian Frassinelli and I serve the Town of Stafford as the Director of Athletics and Recreation, my position oversees all aspects of Educational Based Athletics and Recreation Activities at all levels. I am the Second Vice President of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors and I am writing this testimony with concerns over House Bill 5113.

- Under the current legislation, the State of Connecticut has the most stringent coaching permit and coaching education requirements in the country. We offer the most extensive concussion education course required for coaches in the country, which includes the signs and symptoms of concussions and other brain injuries such as brain bleeds and skull fractures, scalp and neck injuries. Coaches are trained in return to play protocols and this content is reviewed annually with all coaches.
- Because of the diversity in school populations and demographics, our schools need the autonomy to develop their own plans and methods of implementation that will allow them to effectively reach every student and parent. It would be very difficult to adequately reach every student and parent by using only one plan developed by the State Department of Education.
- H.B. 5113 requires the use of a consent form. This form has already been developed using the coaches annual review form previously approved by the SDE, Department of Health, Connecticut Medical Society and Athletic Trainers as the template. Schools are already using this form with their parents and athletes.
- School districts employ trained medical professionals (such as athletic trainers) who work together with the coaches and athletic directors to provide notification to parents when their child exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion. This bill puts the responsibility on the coach rather than on the school district that employs trained medical professionals who are providing prompt notification at this time.
- School districts do not have the resources to accomplish this without employing additional staff. This would create an unfunded mandate and a burden to our schools.
- There is no statewide governing body for all youth sports and many operate as an independent entity. The implementation and regulating of this requirement would be nearly impossible. Furthermore, many park and recreation programs utilize unpaid parents and students to coach and referee their contests. This legislation would deter many from volunteering. While I can support some level of concussion education for youth coaches, parents and participants, HB 5113 is far too extensive for their needs. Concussion Education is very important but Background checks and first aid/CPR is equally important.

In summary, I commend the committee for its concern with student safety however the current law, the extensive coaching education requirements and the recent actions and mandates put out by the CIAC requiring concussion education for parents & students and limiting contact in football practice far exceeds what is being done in other states and is more than adequately serving and insuring the safety of our student-athletes in the state of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Damian Frassinelli

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