

## Testimony for HB 5113

I am Lesley Vandermark from the Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut. I am in support of HB5113, an act concerning youth athletics and concussions. The Korey Stringer Institute at the University of Connecticut strongly supports the proposed Connecticut legislation regarding updating the concussion policies.

Concussion is a serious medical condition that is an important consideration in a wide variety of youth sports. We are especially excited that this legislation will address youth sports beyond just high school, and will focus on all sports where concussion is a concern. As a former high school athletic trainer, I have seen the benefits of the current legislation in providing education to high school coaches. Coaches and athletic administrators are more aware of concussions and more willing to seek appropriate medical attention for their athletes. But high school athletes aren't the only ones getting hurt. It's time to extend those benefits to athletes of all ages.

The media has focused a lot of attention on football, but we believe this has done a disservice from an educational perspective. Sports like soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, ice hockey, wrestling, gymnastics, and many others pose a realistic risk of a youth athlete having a concussion. This legislation helps to educate everyone involved with youth athletics that the risk is ever-present in sport, and knowledge will help us to better prevent, recognize, and treat the condition. The benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks of potential injury, but only in an environment which strives to protect athletes wherever possible.

We believe this bill helps to create an environment that nurtures appropriate knowledge about potential injuries, while protecting our most vulnerable athletic population.

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