

Testimony for HB 5513 and SB 229

Dear Legislator,

My name is Robert Hale and I am principal of Westbrook High School. I also serve as chair of the CIAC Board of Control which oversees and regulates High School Athletics in Connecticut.

I am writing to express my concern for HB 5113- AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS. This bill would unnecessarily increase requirements on school athletic programs where there are already safeguards in place. We are already very concerned and committed to reducing and appropriately addressing concussions among our student athletes as well as many concussions that occur for our nonathlete students. The additional reporting burden that the bill calls for is unnecessary and inappropriate. Each school is best suited to determine its own communication protocol and who is the best person to handle that. The CIAC Board of Control recently increased the requirement on schools to provide annual parent and student education (where previously this was a requirement but not on an annual basis) In addition:

- Connecticut already 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. The Connecticut course covers the signs and symptoms of concussions and the chemical occurrence that happens in the brain during the concussed state, it covers other brain injuries such as brain bleeds and skull fractures, scalp and neck injuries. It also trains the coach in an extensive "return to play protocol" which is annually reviewed with all coaches.
- The current concussion 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.

I also have concerns with SB 229- AN ACT CONCERNING SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PREVENTION. The current coaching law requires all coaches to maintain current first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In addition to cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and rescue breathing CPR courses include signs, symptoms and prevention of heart attacks, causes of heart disease, breathing emergencies such as choking and the proper method for obtaining medical treatment for a student in distress. Also, all of our coaching recertification includes training in the use of an AED.

Additionally, non-teacher coaches by statute must take a 45 hour course which includes 15 hours of instruction on the medical aspects of interscholastic coaching. During those 15 hours our course covers sudden cardiac arrest in great detail. Furthermore, this law places the onus for implementation and notification on the coach rather than the school district that has many more resources to deal with these requirements.

Because state laws already exist that require coaches to have extensive ongoing education and continual first aid & CPR training the portions of this law that place additional requirements on coaches and schools would create an unnecessary additional burden with little benefit, if any, to our students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Hale, Principal
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