

Testimony for 5113

Dear Legislators,

My name is Susan Thomson and I'm a parent of two children who have both had 6 concussions. I support the concussion law because education is absolutely critical to preventing future injuries and the life changing consequences of those injuries. My daughter Alison Thomson is here today to discuss the implications of her concussions, one of which kept her out of school for months. If we and her premier soccer coach had been educated about concussions and the consequences of sustaining a second concussion while still impaired from the first, as well as the long term implications, Ali would not have missed 3 months of 8th grade and have permanent issues she may have for the rest of her life. This is totally preventable. Not a week goes by where I don't have a conversation with a parent, educating them about the symptoms and treatment of a concussion. Sometimes begging them to keep their child quiet (just for a few days to let their brain heal) and out of sports until they are fully recovered. This education should be happening on every team at every level. I'm sure I sound like a crazy parent but this is a very real issue for our children and an issue that this bill can help solve. My youngest daughter (14 years old) spent Monday at a neurologist having a 24 hour EEG because after 6 concussions she has Migraines and other symptoms. We will never eliminate concussions but if we can prevent the preventable second impact syndrome and some of the long term issues that athletes potentially face, that will go a long way.

The current Connecticut law is a shell of a law- it is missing basic provisions of athlete/parent education, informed consent etc. The vast majority of states include these basic provisions. (87% of states include education/78% informed consent) but CT does not.

Education requirements can be simple and non-prescriptive. There are many resources to choose from, many are free and take little time to complete. We have an obligation to protect our youngest and most vulnerable children. This bill extends basic safety measures to youth sports. This bill does it in a non-prescriptive way and leaves it up to youth organizations to determine how to do it.

This is a landmark bill: It is the first to address primary ways to prevent head injuries, instead of just addressing measures after the injuries occur. (90 minute contact practice limit) Injury reporting is critical to evaluating the effects of the bill, and to policy decision-making. Children don't have a voice and it's time that we demand basic safety measures for them.

Thanks for listening.

Susan Thomson
Westport, CT