

Dear Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Betts and Senator Linares and the distinguished members of the Children's

Committee. For the record, my name is Victoria Bonitatebus from Ridgefield, Connecticut this is my testimony in support of/on HB 5113, AN

ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS.

I speak from personal experience as a mother whose son suffered from Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI) and Post Concussion Syndrome for 2

years. This son will also send in his testimony and was in Hartford to testify for the original Concussion bill that was passed in 2010.

For the first six weeks of my son's suffering it was so frustrating, not knowing how to help him, going from doctor to doctor until we finally

found the answers we needed and the help and knowledge necessary to start his recovery. We were finally educated in spotting

the signs and symptoms of a concussion and realizing a concussion IS a Head Injury to the brain. I honestly did not know this originally. Even though my son

is better, I continue to be an advocate and to share my story with other mothers whose children have had or are currently suffering from a concussion and it always

seems to come down to the fact that most of these children do not admit to having symptoms when they continue to play contact sports and

therefore put themselves in additional danger. That is why this bill is so important and future education is necessary.

The 2010 concussion bill is outdated and mainly focuses on what happens after a child is suspected of having a concussion. It does have an

excellent education program for our coaches but is seriously lacking in education where it really counts and that is with the possible victim and

their parents. If education starts at the youth sports level as this bill recommends then our children WILL experience fewer cases of Second

Impact Syndrome or Post Concussion Syndrome. I wish we had this information before my son was hurt.

If we pass this bill it will be considered a landmark bill, the first to address ways to prevent head injuries by putting a limit on contact practices to

90 minutes. It also includes keeping track of head injuries which is critical to evaluating the effects of the bill, and to help with additional policy

decision making to further reduce future exposure to brain injuries. Other states would now follow the guidelines that Connecticut puts in place.

Connecticut cannot continue to be considered a state that does not have the standard of care that other states have. We need to keep our

children safe in every possible way and protecting the brain from Head Injuries is most important.

Simply put, not having this bill in place is just not acceptable, it is absolutely necessary.

