

## Testimony 5113

Good Morning/Afternoon distinguished members of the Children's Committee. For the record, I am Alison Thomson from Westport, CT. I am here to testify on HB 5113 AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS. I am a senior at Staples high school, and I have a younger sister named Lauren who is in eighth grade. Together my little sister and I have had a total of eleven life altering concussions that we are still recovering from today. In fact, just this past Monday, February 24, Lauren had to have her second EEG to hopefully diagnose symptoms of severe migraines and twitching that began to surface after her fourth concussion. The doctors say there is a high possibility that these symptoms could have a direct correlation to the six concussions that she experienced throughout her life so far. Lauren is only thirteen, and due to these brain injuries she may suffer from related health problems for the rest of her life.

My first concussion took place in sixth grade. At that point, the only time I had ever heard the word concussion was in movies after someone had gotten in a car accident or gotten beaten up. I associated concussions with traumatic harmful events; I never thought that I could get one during my U-12 soccer practice. However, that is exactly what happened. I was a soccer goal keeper, and on a breakaway, the forward missed the ball and kicked me in the head. Even though I felt a little dizzy, I kept playing. Within the next five minutes, I went out to make another breakaway save but got knocked down and hit my head hard on the turf. At this point, everything was spinning, I felt very confused, and a little nauseous. My coach helped me off the field, and when I told him my symptoms, he handed me an ice pack, and sent me home at the end of practice with no mention of a possible concussion. I still had a headache when I got home. I mentioned my pain to my parents and described what happened; however, neither of my parents are doctors, or had any prior experience with concussions, so the next day I was back at practice. This was a very dangerous situation to be in because had I gotten hit in the head again at this practice, I could have obtained second impact syndrome, which can be lethal. I did finally get diagnosed. I began cocoon therapy, and missed three weeks of school. In total, I have probably missed over four months of school due to concussions. Thankfully, now that my parents have lived through 11 concussions they know all the signs and understand the treatment plan.

There is no way to completely prevent kids from getting concussions. They can get hit in the head doing pretty much anything. However, educating parents, coaches, and players themselves about causes, symptoms, and long term affects will help keep injured players from further putting themselves in harm's way as I did. Yes, many more concussions followed that first one, but becoming more familiar with them led to a safer and quicker recovery. Concussions are serious brain injuries, but education on the subject can save young lives from being destroyed by their lasting impact.