



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Committee on Children
Testimony of Chief Operating Officer Charlene Russell-Tucker
February 27, 2014

HB 5113: An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, Senator Linares, Representative Betts and members of the Committee on Children, thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on HB 5113, *An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions*.

We certainly appreciate the seriousness of the issue of head injuries and concussions, and acknowledge that we must partner with others to ensure we are addressing this important issue; we have a number of concerns with the proposed legislation.

In section 1, the language in subsections (d) and (e) is particularly concerning because the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), not the State Department of Education (SDE), oversees interscholastic sports. SDE would have no way to track or enforce the prohibition on participation. Further, the creation and distribution of a form would fall to CIAC for enforcement. Finally, CGS 10-149b provides a definition of "other brain injuries." Using this definition throughout the bill assumes that all brain injuries, irrespective of how they were sustained, must be addressed as indicated in the bill. We would like to clarify whether this is indeed the intent of the legislation.

In section 2, we would like to request that school nurses be added to those who must be notified within 24 hours by a student athlete's coach.

In Section 3, while we do oversee coaching permits, much of this oversight would fall to the CIAC. The CIAC serves as the regulatory agency for interscholastic athletic programs and would therefore set the requirements for participation in sports.

In section 5, we would like to note that the Department has no oversight over referees, officials, umpires or judges as these are not certification areas.

Finally, in section 6, while we understand the importance of collecting data, there are concerns about adding yet another data collection for schools in a time when we are working very hard to reduce mandates and burdens on districts. The language of "not less than twice" is especially concerning as it opens the door for multiple data collections within a school year. Additionally, as stated above, the broad language of "other brain injuries" would likely require additional resources for districts to research all accidents and incidents in the district to determine whether they should be included in the data collection.

We look forward to ongoing conversations with this Committee and other stakeholder groups to ensure we are all working together to best address this important issue.