



# BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

139 Patterson Way \* Berlin, CT 06037



February 24, 2014

Testimony and Concern regarding:

## ***House Bill 5113 – AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS***

My name is Daniel Scavone and I serve as Director of Athletics for The Berlin Public Schools in Berlin, Connecticut. I am also President-Elect of the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors (CAAD) and a state certified basketball official. I have been an Educator, Coach and Administrator in this state for the past 24 years and I am writing this testimony with concerns over this proposed legislation.

I clearly understand that the intention of this bill is to enhance safety measures for students and youth across the state of Connecticut. While I do advocate for safety through education, I must state that this bill goes well beyond the scope of practicality and cost effectiveness in relation to what is already being done in Connecticut. Currently, we are and have been leaders in implementing Concussion Education and Management Programs throughout the United States. I would like to comment on some specific items of concern both as an Athletic Director and a Basketball Official for over 20 years.

- **Having one uniform training program to meet the needs of various groups such as students of varied ages, sports officials, coaches and parents is not optimal and wouldn't adequately serve the purpose of quality education. Schools, Communities, and Official's Groups need to have the flexibility to design programs to effectively reach the intended audience. They know best how to design, plan and implement such a program that will be functional and well received.**
- **I am adamantly opposed to any type of wait period or the ability of parents to utilize a consent release form. Concussion Signs and Symptoms can mimic other physical maladies which can be the result of lack of sleep, proper nutrition, even stress. I unequivocally trust our trained medical staff to make critical assessments related to suspected concussions. They are familiar with our student athlete's medical histories, and know them as individuals. Thus they can make informed decisions and institute an already medically sound return to play protocol without having to worry about parents demanding their child to take the field of play after a pre-determined time limit. In addition, some parents have tried and would be empowered to search for doctors who would be willing to authorize a return to play release based on limited information. The current law prevents these types of occurrences and ensures that the child returns to play in a safe reliable manner of time.**
- **As a basketball official, we and every other sports official are required to attend annual rules interpretation meetings under the umbrella of the National Federation of High Schools. Included in this program is training and a thorough annual review of the signs and symptoms of concussions. It is not our role as independent contractors to diagnose concussions. It is merely to be able to identify the signs and symptoms in athletes who may have sustained a concussion and then notify the appropriate team personnel such as athletic trainer and/or the coach.**



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- **Collecting and reporting occurrences would be a tremendous burden for schools that, most likely, already are short staffed and financially strapped. It would certainly in my opinion not be cost effective.**

In summary, the current law has shown to be very effective in educating the many coaches, parents, athletes and officials that make our programs both successful and safe as possible. Our state association, the CIAC has worked diligently in providing the resources needed to carry out this important mission. As a matter of fact, at Berlin High School during each seasonal student athlete/parent meeting, I have my Athletic Trainer do a presentation on the signs and symptoms of concussions and our protocol in how to manage them. I do not feel any added mandates would add any benefits without the additional burdens that would come along with it. I believe it would deter many from participating in athletics and that would negatively impact the educational benefits that sports programs provide.

Sincerely,

*Daniel Scavone*

Daniel Scavone, CMAA