

Testimony for 5113

Dear Legislator,

My name is Fred Capozziello, and I am a lacrosse/football high school(and youth) official. I live in the town of North Haven and I am writing to express my concern for HB 5113- AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSION

The NFHS "concussion rule" does not create a duty that officials are expected to perform a medical diagnosis. Referees are simply asked to use their best judgment in observing and being more cognizant of athletes that may be displaying signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with concussion, and stop play to provide the opportunity for the athlete to be properly checked by the individuals in charge of their care. Specifically, mandating additional requirements for referees, who are independent contractors, and increasing the liability exposure for these individuals who serve high school and youth sports, will have a major negative impact. We are not doctors. All we can do is recognize the symptoms of a possible concussion and seek medical relief from the site directors of the venue we working at.

While several states, including New Jersey, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, have laws that extend immunity to officials against law suits to reduce their liability, this proposed law would increase the exposure for officials in Connecticut. Increasing the liability exposure for these individuals who serve high school and youth sports, will have a major negative impact. There is a shortage of officials on all levels of amateur sports and HB 5113, as drafted, is certain to be a deterrent to attracting new officials (and keeping the ones we have). The officials in our state are dedicated men and women who serve the sport(s) in which they officiate, not for the fee involved, but rather for the love of the game and to help our youth. In short, although this proposed legislation is very well intended, HB 5113 should not be passed as drafted.