

Testimony for HB 5113

Good Afternoon Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Betts and Senator Linares and the distinguished members of the Children's Committee. For the record, my name is Katherine Price Snedaker, and I live in Norwalk, CT, and speaking as a parent and also as an MSW for [Pink Concussions.com](http://PinkConcussions.com) - an organization which focusing on female concussions - and SportsCAPP.com - a youth sport concussion educational organization.

I am here to testify in support of HB 5113, AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH ATHLETICS AND CONCUSSIONS. Before I continue, I want to take this chance to show you how powerful, simple and free concussion education can be. I have listed three websites which will take in total 9 minutes to view which I believe will show why concussion education is essential, give you the education you need and load a app on your phone which will allow you to help any child or adult who has a possible concussion.

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/video/2013/dec/13/concussion-sport-death-ben-robinson-video>

<http://brain101.orcasinc.com/5000/>

http://www4.parinc.com/products/Product.aspx?ProductID=CRR_APP

From a personal and professional prospective, concussions have changed my life. In and out of sports, I have suffered many concussions. Based on my double digit concussion history, I was accepted in BU CTE Legacy Study 2 years ago and on my death my brain will studied for signs of CTE. As a mother, watching as my two sons' lives affected by concussions. Despite having three sons in daily year around sports, the only concussion education I had was having read article in US Lacrosse magazine, yet that one article motivated me to take the correct steps to have my son checked by a doctor. One son now 14 suffered two concussions, my other son now 17 has suffered ten concussions - 1 at school recess, 2 on the school bus, 2 in youth sports. He was a straight A student - a few years of perfect scores on the CMTs - and in a matter of hours, was reduced to a child who couldn't read more than two lines of text. One night when he was healing from the first concussion, I asked if he wanted chicken or steak for dinner, he started to cry and said he didn't know how to decide. Now as junior, he is back in honors classes but cannot still suffers with weekly headaches and issues with executive functioning. Just a few minutes of concussion education, a article, a flyer and iPhone app can make the difference in how a parent responds to their child's possible head injury.

As youth coach for boys lacrosse and soccer for five years, I just didn't see head injuries. But after concussion education and with the free PAR CRR app designed by Dr. Gerry Gioia on my iPhone, in one year alone, I pulled at five youth players from lax and soccer games and assessed they needed to "sit it out and see a doctor." All five players I pulled were later diagnosed by their MDs with concussions, and I was convinced sideline concussion education works.

Now as mental health expert in concussion field, I attend the NFL's Concussion Health & Safety Meetings and have spoken to Commissioner Roger Goodell, and the CEOs of US Lacrosse, US Hockey, Little League, USA Cheer, and American Youth Soccer. These leaders are very aware of need for safer sports and the liability issues of concussions facing youth sport. Some organizations have already educated all their coaches and others are preparing to move in that direction as time and resources allow. I also was invited the Institute of Medicine present to them on the effects of concussions on youth athletes and their families. This committee issued the IOM federal report on youth sport concussions this past fall. Through these experiences, I have been able to view concussions from a national prospective, and I truly believe:

1. **Concussion Education must be expanded** horizontally from middle and high schools coaches to include students, parents and school staff on concussion facts and the consequences of not reporting head injuries. Education must be mandatory for parents. I know from years of experience, parents do not attend concussion events unless they are required for their children to play a sport.
2. **Concussion Education must be expanded** vertically down from the high school to youth sports which include elementary and middle school age students, coaches, parents include youth sports organizations in a non-prescriptive way. This is not the huge burden it is made out to be. There is a free 20 minute course on the CDC website for coaches to take at home and print a certificate which can be given to their sports team. The CDC has free flyers for sports teams to use for parent and athletes.
3. **Communication must be improved** between coaches, school nurses, athletic trainers, parents and medical providers. Again this is possible with free technology available today for Connecticut schools and sports leagues - it must be smart-phone based, real-time, tracable and be FERPA and HIPAA Compliance.
4. **Data must be collected** at local, regional, state levels on all student-athlete injuries to evaluate the effects of the current law, any changes to the law, and for research to direct future policy. Our current data is weak on all aspects of concussions. Data is essential and I believe the key to collecting data is streamlined, app-based, paper-free, smart-phone apps.

So much has changed in the six years, I have been studying concussions. As this science is in its infancy, I would urge the committee to pass law that is flexible as I believe many the "facts" of today will need to be modified in the future. Connecticut led the way in the first round of concussion legislation in 2010, and will return to the leadership role when this bill becomes law in 2014.

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