

Testimony for HB 5113

Honorable Legislators,

*I am writing to ask you to support the Bill before you today, An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions.*

*In October of 2011 my son, then a 12 year old seventh grader at an Independent School in Fairfield, sustained a severe concussion during a school football practice drill called 'Bull In The Ring'.*

*"Bull In The Ring" puts one player in the middle of a circle made up of many team members, whose numbers are called by a coach, at random, to tackle the one in the middle. From all different sides, from the front, and from behind. It is known as a particularly dangerous practice drill, one that has been banned by many organizations. Due to the severity of his concussion, my son missed 6 months of school and was medicated for debilitating headaches for over a year.*

*The bill before you recommends limits on full contact practices and a provision to identify and recommend best practices for contact sport safety, with a goal of decreasing exposure to concussion and brain injury. Had this legislation been in place, chances are the "Bull in The Ring" drill would have been banned at my son's school as it has been voluntarily in numerous CT school districts and youth sports organizations.*

*Simply put, **this legislation addresses the critical need for uniform prevention education, informed consent, and best practice identification for concussion safety.** Connecticut's existing law does not contain these basic provisions; ones that a vast majority of states do include (87% of states include education/78% informed consent).*

***State legislation is essential as CIAC mandates do not cover independent school or non-school based youth sports programs.** This bill extends basic safety measures to independent school and non-school based youth sports, and does it in a non-prescriptive way which leaves specific implementation up to youth organizations/schools.*

*I urge your support of this Bill.*

*With sincere thanks,*

*Melissa Kane  
Westport, CT*