

Rebecca Michlin HB 5113

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and the esteemed members on the Committee on Children,

To provide a little background to myself, I was recruited to play soccer at Colgate University. I had a decorated career prior to college and also received honors from the Patriot League while in school. I couldn't wait to lace up my cleats and go to practice. Being recruited to a Division I soccer program was like a dream come true – everything I worked so hard for became a reality. An average week of training for me would include at least 20 hours, most of which included full contact practices.

While at Colgate, I received a string of three concussions in an eight month time frame while on the practice field. Only one of the concussions that I sustained was caused by contact with another player – the other two were simply from the contact of the ball to my face. After receiving my concussions, I was a completely different person. I had to leave the semester early on two separate occasions – due to the initial concussion and a terrible post-concussive disorder that developed. Not only did I struggle to comprehend and remember things, but growing frustrations with the limitations of a recovering mind were extremely disheartening – after all, no one could see my injury, I looked like the same Rebecca everyone knew, how could I not be myself?

After a difficult two year recovery process, I was able to, once again, excel at academics. The reason I attended Colgate University was my ability to balance Division I athletics and rigorous academics. I can promise this committee that I and girls I played high school soccer with in Southington would not have been able to live their dreams of playing Division I soccer with limitations like the ones proposed in HB 5113.

Concussions are difficult to understand and heartbreaking to see anyone struggle with. If anything, what is most important with concussions is knowledge and a doctor approving return to contact activities. It is my understanding that the CIAC, the governing body for Connecticut High School Athletics has courses that deal with the injury of concussions and require each high school to have an athletic trainer – let them to continue to govern what they know best. I'm asking the committee to revise HB 5113 so as not to step on the dreams of our youngest residents as they strive for athletic greatness by limiting the amount of contact practices they can have in a week. Thank you for your time.

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