

Testimony for HB 5113

February 27, 2014

Committee on Children Public Hearing Testimony

An Act Concerning Youth Athletes And Concussions

Tucker Callanan

Good Afternoon Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Betts and Senator Linares and the distinguished members of the Children's Committee. My name is Tucker Callanan, and I am testifying today in favor of Raised Bill 5113: An Act Concerning Youth Athletes And Concussions.

Not many twenty one year old students can say that their college major has greatly changed, or possibly saved their lives. However, I can truthfully say that if I had not been a neuroscience major at Trinity College, there is a strong possibility that I would be living a completely different and worse-off life. When I enrolled at Trinity College with hopes of a long and successful soccer career, I barely knew what a concussion was. I had heard of the term being used and lethargically took the "IMPACT" test that all college athletes at Trinity were required to take, however, I thought that concussions were limited to football and that they would never be relevant to me. After suffering two concussions in back to back seasons, I learned how relevant they were, even in a game with limited contact like soccer. Thankfully, both of my concussions were properly diagnosed and treated. I was kept off the field and given adequate time to recover in both cases. However, this was mostly due to the fact that I had a lot of respect for my training staff, and as I mentioned earlier, my major. Being a Neuroscience major at Trinity, by the time I suffered my first concussion sophomore year I had already taken multiple psychology and neuroscience classes, where I learned the severity of concussions and the impact they can have. If not for these classes, I may have been less likely to tell my trainers the extent of my symptoms. During my four years, I witnessed over a dozen of my teammates suffer concussions, a third of whom never told a soul. As athletes, we have been taught from a young age to play through the pain and sacrifice for the team. By telling your trainer that you have a headache or aren't feeling normal after a blow to the head, athletes are going against their engrained instincts to tough it out. If it weren't for my extensive knowledge on the subject, I probably would have not been entirely truthful with my trainers either. For that reason, I fully support this bill to provide more knowledge and awareness to parents, players, refs, etc. about the severe impact concussions can have. This knowledge potentially saved my life and career, and I believe it needs to be shared with everyone.