



POSITION STATEMENT OF THE
CONNECTICUT PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)
REGARDING HB 6722 AAC Concussions in Youth Athletics

The Connecticut Parent Teachers Association (PTA) represents over 44,000 members throughout Connecticut. PTA has been a leading advocate for responsible safety rules around sports and recreation participation, education of all stakeholders in the signs, symptoms and treatment of traumatic head injury and the overall safety of children in their schools, sports and the community. Our association believes it is important to protect children with regards to concussions.

The PTA recognizes and supports the need for education and awareness and commits to working with policy makers to keep Connecticut in the forefront of preventing head injuries among young athletes.

Connecticut PTA has the following areas of concern with the Raise Bill 6722 AAC Concussions in Youth Athletics

- Section 1 (a)(1) The use of the term “intramural” is concerning. Do all intramural coaches have a coaching permit? This may involve afterschool volunteers that have no coaching permit or those that are unaware they may be leading a “youth athletic activity”
- Section 1 (2) It is unclear how the coach is to obtain and report the annual review of current information. Is there an enforcement mechanism?
- Section 2 (1) Participants over the age of 18 are of legal majority and should not be covered by this legislation. Also, what happens if a youth under 18 years old participates in an adult league? Is this league now under the jurisdiction of this law?
- Section 2 (1) (B) “Pay a fee” is a good step forward, but does this include fundraising activities? Examples may be softball tournaments, walk-a-thons, 5K & 10K running races, etc. Does a generally instructive afterschool program that may have an end of program “competition” become under the clause? A larger question comes with camps and instructional leagues, i.e. Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs, etc.
- Section 2(2)(b) Should include electronic dissemination of the information.
- Return to play – We continue to have questions about who “a licensed health care professional trained in evaluation and management of concussions” is in this context. In addition, the level of activity is to be monitored by the coach. This relies on both observation and self-reporting by the athlete – A difficult juggle for parents, much less a coach.



In addition to the scope of the legislation as presented, Connecticut PTA has additional concerns not addressed in the original legislation. They include, but are not limited to:

- There is no mention of immunity to liability for volunteers and leaders that are assisting youth in their continued growth as athletes and citizens. Although there is much discussion on this topic, we believe that no legislation is complete without some sort of immunity language for volunteer coaches and instructors.
- There is no guideline or mention of any “return to school” protocol. Let’s remember that these are “student-athletes” and the primary concern is for the children’s health – whether it be physical, mental or emotional health. We should address the whole child.
- From our research, most concussions occur outside of organized athletic activities. From playgrounds to school hallways to icy sidewalks, concussions happen every day. Further education of parents and school personnel, beyond those involved in athletics is important. The current legislation does not address many of the issues borne from these scenarios.
- There already exist a plethora of information, educational materials and resources in the public domain, on head injuries. There are also agencies outside of government regulating these activities in a safe and responsible manner. All of these existing resources should be utilized before reinventing the wheel and wasting limited resources.

In conclusion, the Connecticut PTA commends the Legislature for acting on this issue. We strongly believe in the intent and purpose of this legislation– to protect the health and welfare of our most valuable resource, our children. As the largest membership based child advocacy association in Connecticut and the nation, we will provide any assistance and resources needed to the Committee as they move forward in their work.

About Connecticut PTA

Connecticut PTA comprises over 44,000 members consisting of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools and well-being of children. PTA is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education, children’s health and child welfare. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health and welfare of children and youth.