

February 17, 2015

Committee on Children Public Hearing Testimony

Julie Peters, CBIS, Executive Director

Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC)

Good Afternoon Representative Urban, Senator Bartolomeo and the distinguished members of the Children's Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this important hearing regarding the safety of our youth. My name is Julie Peters and I am the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut (BIAC). For over 30 years, BIAC has served individuals with brain injuries, their families and caregivers, educating the public about prevention, which remains the only cure for a brain injury, and working to assure that services are available to those who sustain a brain injury.

A representative from BIAC has served on the Legislative task force to study occurrences of concussions in youth athletics which led to Raised Bill 6722: *AN ACT CONCERNING CONCUSSIONS IN YOUTH ATHLETICS*. I am here today to support this bill and extend existing legislation on concussion education and management to Youth Athletics programs through-out Connecticut.

The facts are known:

- A concussion is a brain injury;
- All brain injuries are serious and
- According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur in the United States each year

The consequences of not extending mandatory concussion education to youth athletics could be catastrophic and only prolong the concussion health crisis.

Most parents and coaches are not professionally trained in medicine, which is why the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut believes this important legislation is so critical.

It is time to broaden the concussion education mandate to protect all of our youth athletes from needless disability, our parents from the lifelong burden of care-giving, and our State and its taxpayers from the long-term dependence on public programs that brain injuries foster.

Accordingly, I urge you to pass Raised House Bill 6722 to reduce the number of concussions in children in our state.

Thank you.

Julie Peters, CBIS