



CONNECTICUT ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION

Testimony for the Connecticut Athletic Trainer's Association (CATA): Eleni Diakogeorgiou, MBA, ATC, LAT

To: Children's Committee

RE: Raised HB 6722

Date: February 17, 2015

Good morning Representative Urban, and members of the Children's Committee. I am here on behalf of the Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA) in regard to HB 6722, "AAC Concussions in Youth Athletics." The CATA is a strong and active proponent of youth sports safety. We were very involved with the original concussion bill, and the update to the concussion bill last year. We appreciate the Committee's attention to ensuring the safety of youth athletes in regards to concussions. We are especially pleased that education for youth sports coaches, athletes, and parents is included, and strongly support that proposal.

We do have some concerns about the bill, in regards to consistency of language and about the language itself. It is my understanding that this bill might also be amended to include the recommendations of the Youth Concussion Task Force in which we have appointed an Athletic Training representative. I have included in my written testimony our (CATA) testimony on those recommendations, and have provided specific examples and, suggestions. I will briefly summarize our general position on areas within the bill.

- 1) We support requiring education and training for youth sports coaches, and education regarding concussions for athletes and parents. This is an area we have heard concern voiced about from our members, physicians, school nurses, parents, and other members of the public since the original bill became law. We strongly support a proposal to expand concussion law to include youth sports.
- 2) We are supportive of concussion education for youth sports coaches and other officials receiving training in concussion education. We suggest there be safeguards in place to protect those individuals from liability.
- 3) We suggest concussion education for youth sports parents, athletes and coaches be the responsibility of the sponsoring municipality or youth sports league, and allow them to decide how to get the information out to parents and athletes – electronic or written.
- 4) As written, the bill could be interpreted as applying to high school athletes at the high school as they fall in the age ranges of 7-19 (or 3-19) in addition to confusion arising due to high schools being supported by municipalities. We want to ensure that the current concussion bill as written remains the same and there is no confusion on what is required for high school sports in regards to concussion and that this bill remain for other athletic activities not involved at the high school. In addition to this we are not certain if HB 6722 is an addendum to the current bill or will be completely separate.
- 5) Additional confusion may arise in regards to licensed health care provider – it is unclear if licensed health care provider is interpreted as the definition from the current concussion bill or as defined by the state.
- 6) There are some instances where a coach may be privately contracted, for example: gymnastics centers, figure skating, equestrian, etc. This bill does not address those situations.

Thank you again for your attention to youth sports safety and concussion in sports. The CATA would be happy to assist the Committee in its efforts to advance the bill.

The CATA recommends the following changes to the Youth Concussion Bill as amended by the Youth Concussion Task Force. Our recommended changes are in italics and underlined.

**Section (2) “Athletic Activity”:**

(A) to “engage in an organized athletic game or competition against another team, club, entity or other youth competitors, and....

**Reason:** there are some individual sports which are not covered by the definition of youth activity, one example is with figure skating – a sport that has a high incidence of concussion and other Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

(B) “Athletic activity” does not include any college or university athletic activity, intramural or interscholastic activities defined in Section 10-149b, an activity entered into for instructional purposes...”

**Reason:** the concussion act for high schools is much more stringent, this bill as written may contradict that bill because high school athletes can be considered youth athletes

**Section (2) “Operator”**

(c) change to “require each volunteer coach for a youth activity and each coach who the club, facility, or league directly contracts, formally employs to coach a youth activity, or a coach who is directly contracted by the parent or guardian of a youth athlete at a club or facility to complete an annual concussion education course...

**Reason:** some coaches for individual youth sports are contracted through the family/guardian and not through the sponsoring organization / facility

(4) The proper procedures for allowing a youth athlete who has sustained...”

**Reason:** Should be consistent with previous statements.

(c) (1) add: “...legal guardian. The date and cause of injury, date and time of contact with a parent or guardian shall be documented of all suspected concussion and kept on file with the club or facility. Youth athlete experiencing a concussion shall not be permitted to return to play in any supervised individual or team athletic activities involving ...”

**Reason:** this type of condition should be documented as a matter of common practice (along with all other injuries for that matter). Additionally some wording regarding the “club or entity” is not consistent throughout the document

The way the bill is written youth athletes could RTP if involved in individual sports

(3) Change: “...or an athletic league may allow a licensed athletic trainer with specific knowledge...”

**Reason:** athletic trainers are not registered in Connecticut, we have licensure