



Testimony of the Connecticut Parent Teachers Association

Before the Committee on Children

10:00 AM, Room 2A, Legislative Office Building

February 16, 2016

Good Morning. My name is Kathleen Kennedy. I am the President of the Connecticut Parent Teachers Association (PTA), which represents over 43,000 members throughout Connecticut. I am here today to testify regarding: **HB 5131**  
**An Act Concerning Concussions And Youth Athletic Activities Conducted On Public Athletic Fields.**

The CT 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 regard to concussions.

CT PTA supports the intent and goals of **HB 5141**, but has serious reservations about the proposal as drafted. We believe that we should increase rather than decrease opportunities for our children to safely participate in physical activity and sport at all levels. **HB 5141** proposes to extend many of the requirements of interscholastic sports to youth sports. It is widely recognized that applying interscholastic mandates to youth sports may have serious unintended consequences, which may not be consistent with CT PTA's goal of increasing rather than decreasing safe participation.

As drafted HB 5141:

- 1). Would require that all coaches of youth athletic activities, whether paid or volunteer, take a training course or attend in person training.
- 2). Would require parents and guardians to either read or view training materials or attend an in-person training session.
- 3). Would require parents to sign and return an informed consent form that they have read or viewed the training materials.

We are concerned that such provisions will be difficult if not impossible to enforce and may reduce the opportunity for children to play. Consequently at this time, CT PTA cannot support HB 5141 as drafted.

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.

PTA members are involved in virtually every aspect of youth sports in Connecticut and can assist in various capacities. We must not discourage the participation of our children in youth sports. We believe children should have the benefits of safe and healthy recreational activities.

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.

As the largest membership based child advocacy association in Connecticut and the nation, we will provide any assistance and resources needed. PTA strongly believes in the protection of the health and welfare of our most valuable resource, our children.

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