



CONNECTICUT COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

An Alliance of the:
Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference
Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors
Connecticut High School Coaches Association

Fred Balsamo, CMAA ^ 30 Realty Drive ^ Cheshire, CT 06410
(203) 651-3921 ^ Fax (203) 250-1345 ^ Email fbalsamo@casciac.org

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Testimony and Concern for:

Raised Bill No. 5141 - AN ACT CONCERNING CONCUSSIONS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED ON PUBLIC ATHLETIC FIELDS.

My name is Fred Balsamo and I am a Wallingford resident and manage the coaching education program for the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC), Connecticut Association of Athletic directors (CAAD) and the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA). I am also the executive director of CAAD, which represents the athletic directors in 188 high school and 150 middle school athletic programs across the state.

I have dedicated most of my career in the development of educational programs for coaches to insure the safety of our student-athletes in Connecticut. While I applaud the committee for once again taking an interest in student safety I have several serious concerns with changes in the current law the committee is considering.

The original law was enacted 2010 and served the state well. It was revised in 2014 and every year since which is creating much confusion amongst the people who it effects. Specifically, the change for school coaches to go from a five year refresher to a two year refresher is totally unnecessary and there is no substantiation that it is needed. Furthermore, the five year period of time was logically selected to coincide with the 5 year permit renewal process which provides an accurate way to check on the requirement. Additionally, the law currently states all school coaches must have an annual review. Last year we, along with the State Department of Education, modified the "annual review" document to mandate one of three media sources (Connecticut Concussion Task Force video, CDC online course, NFHS concussion online course). Coaches are being inundated with concussion education and a refresher course every two years is an additional burden which will only deplete the pool of qualified coaches.

Secondly, with reference to youth activities. The proposed changes reference fields and open spaces. What about small rooms, indoor soccer fields and gymnasiums where athletic activity tasks place? The non-school youth activity piece of this legislation is far too large to write a law and encompass everything. Those programs are offered by volunteers and the education requirement you are imposing would stifle their existence. The amendment last year did a good job to raise the awareness level and educate everyone involved. I urge the committee to allow it to serve the purpose it was intended and to STOP this annual need for change without substantiation!

Sincerely,

Fred Balsamo

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