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**TESTIMONY RE: TESTIMONY RE: Raised Bill No. 5141 AN ACT CONCERNING CONCUSSIONS
AND YOUTH ATHELETES CONDUCTED ON PUBLIC ATHLETIC FIELDS**

Committee on Children

February 16, 2016

Good Afternoon, Senator Bartolemeo, Representative Urban and esteemed members of the Committee on Children.

I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA). I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association. I speak in strong support of Raised Bill No. 5141 AN ACT CONCERNING CONCUSSIONS AND YOUTH ATHELETES CONDUCTED ON PUBLIC ATHLETIC FIELDS

A concussion is a type of Traumatic Brain Injury or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity. So, all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs. Head injuries among youngsters playing sports, particularly basketball, appear to be on the rise. This is especially disturbing since adolescents and teens, with their still-developing brains, are at higher risk for long-term developmental and cognitive problems after such injuries.

A study conducted by Nationwide Hospital in Ohio found the number of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) increased by 70 percent among young basketball players from 1997 to 2007. At the same time, there was a drop in the number of other injuries, such as sprains, strains and lacerations.

The retrospective study, published in the Sept. 13, 2010, issue of *Pediatrics*, looked at 4.1 million basketball-related injuries in children and adolescents from ages 5 to 19 who were treated in emergency departments. Over the 11-year study period, the number of TBIs doubled for boys and tripled for girls. The study authors speculated that bigger, stronger players may account for the dramatic increase of TBIs among girls.

Another study, conducted at Rhode Island Hospital/Hasbro Children's Hospital, examined emergency department visits for sports-related concussions in all sports among young athletes. Using the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System and All Injury Program, they looked at half a million emergency department visits for concussions in children ages

8 to 19 from 2001 to 2005. About half of these concussions were sports related, and most were sustained by 8- to 13-year-olds.

The top five concussion-generating team sports were football, basketball, baseball, ice hockey and soccer. Football and basketball accounted for the majority, but that could be related to the increased numbers of participants, the authors noted.

The number of TBIs in young athletes may actually be greater than research had shown, the authors of the Ohio study note. They found that more than one-third of the players didn't recognize concussion symptoms or report them to trainers. "To address the problem of TBIs and to manage them effectively, education of coaches and athletes is vital."

At a recent Mayo Clinic hockey summit, participants proposed a total ban on contact at the head at all levels of hockey; mandatory education of coaches, parents, referees and physicians about how to recognize, treat and prevent concussions; and prohibiting athletes from returning to play until they are cleared by a doctor. The recommendations in the current literature are to 1). Educate Coaches, Parents, and Athletes: Inform and educate coaches, athletes, and their parents and guardians about concussion through training and/or a concussion information sheet, 2). Remove Athlete from Play: An athlete who is believed to have a concussion is to be removed from play right away. Early recognition, diagnosis and treatment are essential to the health of young athletes.

Based on the aforementioned information and in order to protect the young athletes' in our State, we strongly urge the members of the Committee on Children to support Raised Bill No. 5141 AN ACT CONCERNING CONCUSSIONS AND YOUTH ATHLETES CONDUCTED ON PUBLIC ATHLETIC FIELDS

Thank you

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Chair, Government Relation, Connecticut Nurses Association

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Sources:

Map of Concussion in Sports Legislation. National Conference of State

Legislatures. <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/traumatic-brain-injury-legislation.aspx>.

McCrory, Meeuwisse, Johnston, Dvorak, Aubry, Molloy, Cantu. Consensus statement on concussion in sport – The 3rd International Conference on concussion in sport, held in Zurich, November 2008, Journal of Clinical Neuroscience 16 (2009) 755–763.