



THE CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

Testimony on HB 7253- An Act Concerning Minor Revisions and Additions to the Education Statutes

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As a non-profit entity, the CIAC has the ability to be flexible within our by-laws and respond quickly through by-law changes. CAS and CIAC were the leaders in establishing concussion education for students, coaches and parents beginning with the 2010 legislation. As new information is learned, we can quickly revise rules and regulations. Even issues regarding scheduling of events and sites require flexibility. One bad day of weather can impact up to thirty thousand student-athletes across the state and require countless hours of reorganization and adjustment on the part of hundreds of people.

At the same time that our organization must be flexible, some of our rules must remain in place to insure that certain standards apply to all schools; standards that best serve all students in the state. For example, we are occasionally asked why a student can't attend a school of choice that offers an athletic program while also "playing back" at the sending school. This particular rule is in place to support the students who attend and choose to participate in athletics in the sending school; to prevent those students from being displaced on a team by a student who chooses to attend school elsewhere. It is also designed to prevent a student from possibly competing for two high schools without a legitimate transfer. As mentioned earlier, there is a process in place to request a timely exception to a rule. It is important that this process remain in the hands of member school leaders who sit on our boards and have extensive knowledge of the rationale for our rules and the implications associated with rule exceptions or changes.

CAS-CIAC is deeply concerned that the task force proposed in the bill is made up of members who are not experienced or thoroughly informed in the work of the CIAC. It does not even include educational stakeholders such as the CSDE, CABE, CAPSS, or the PTA. The make-up of the task force seems to be clearly designed to suit the desires of particular legislator(s) and does not offer a balanced educational perspective.

Most importantly, we are concerned that such a task force would issue recommendations that call for legislative interruption and oversight of CIAC policies and practices that would undermine the business of the association. Potential legislative changes to CIAC by-laws would compromise the integrity of education-based programs. Changes driven by individual opinion and geared toward individual situations would erode the important statewide structure in place that best supports our diverse membership, and protects the health and safety of students in our Connecticut schools. The efforts and opinions of leaders in ~200 member schools, representing over 110,000 student athletes, who work to develop and implement CIAC policies and programs would be devalued. The CIAC would lose flexibility, relevance and effectiveness, along with the ability to fulfill the CIAC mission.