Bill No.: HB-7004
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING CONCUSSION EDUCATION FOR COACHES OF YOUTH ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES.
Vote Date: 3/12/2019
Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute
PH Date: 2/7/2019

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SPONSORS OF BILL:
Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:
To require youth coaches to participate in an online concussion course for youth activities conducted on fields, courts, and recreational areas under the supervision of municipalities.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:
Representative Nicole Klarides-Ditria:
She expressed her support for this bill. She mentioned that as an athletic trainer herself she has seen the dangers that concussions can cause. She feels that requiring coaches to obtain this training it will lead to a safer environment for all children.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
The Connecticut Athletic Trainers’ Association:
The association expressed its support for this bill with amended language. The association asked that exempting coaches from being held liable for not following the law be removed. By doing so the association feels that the coaches will have an incentive to follow the law which will keep students safe.

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities:
The association expressed its support for this bill. The association mentioned that it would only support this bill if the language that protects municipalities from civil liability remains intact. This language ensures that municipalities will continue to provide recreational programs without fearing civil liability.
Jennifer Falotico from the Connecticut Parent Teacher Association:
She expressed her support for this bill. She mentioned that the safety of all children is a major concern for this organization. She feels the legislators have taken those concerns into consideration in the language of this bill. Therefore, she supports the bill as written.

Steven Hernandez from the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors expressed his support for this bill with amended language. He mentioned that concussions are a major concern for athletes because they cause brain injury that can stunt growth development. Therefore, he feels that training is important for coaches. However, he would like to see the language in the bill amended to require CDC training of all youth coaches, and to limit the immunity provision to only coaches that have received this training and acted according to it.

Glenn Lungarini from the Connecticut Association of Schools/ Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference:
He expressed support for this bill with amended language. He mentioned interscholastic coaches who hold a coaching permit are required to participate in a three hour concussion module. He believes this is superior to the CDC tutorial this bill is proposing. Therefore, he would like the bill’s language to be amended so that these coaches are exempt from receiving additional training that would conflict with what the association has already done.

Elizabeth Mayne from the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association:
She expressed support for this bill. She would like the committee to pass the bill as written. She also mentioned that they could not support any changes in language that increase the liability for towns, its volunteers, and its employees.

David Wang from the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center:
He expressed his support for this bill. He mentioned that it is extremely important for people to be educated about the dangers of concussions. He also expressed that this bill would provide coaches with adequate training to effectively respond to concussions, which would be beneficial to children. For these reasons he offers his support for this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Fred Balsamo from the Connecticut Coaching Education Program:
He expressed his opposition to this bill. He mentioned that the bill’s language is very confusing as it does not specify that school coaches who are already required to have a coaching permit be excluded from this legislation. These coaches are already trained in concussion education and therefore they do not need to be retrained as this law would require of them. For these reasons Fred believes that without clarifying the language of this bill the new legislation will conflict with legislation regarding this matter already in place.

Pippa Bell Ader:
She expressed her opposition to this bill. She mentioned that as the law is written currently it would require coaches to obtain concussion training, but it would also exempt them from liability from not following the law. Her concern is that this will have a negative impact on the lives of athletes inside and outside of the school system.

Julie Peters from the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut:
She expressed her opposition to this bill. She mentioned that although it is important to train coaches on how to handle concussions, removing any liability for the coaches will eliminate the incentive to act according to their training. This can be very detrimental to the health of Connecticut’s children. For these reasons Julie urges the legislators to oppose this bill.

**Paul Slager, the former president of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut:**

He expressed his opposition to this bill. He mentioned that requiring coaches to obtain concussion training and then providing immunity from civil liability as a result of not following the law is ineffective. He believes that the language of this bill sends the message that following the law is optional. Therefore, this would reduce the safety of all children. For these reasons he urges legislators to oppose this bill.

**Reported by:** Dea Ballij  
**Date:** 03/13/2019