



June 30, 2015

The Honorable Dick Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Senator Durbin,

Thank you for your leadership in introducing the Protecting Student Athletes from Concussions Act, which we understand will be presented as an amendment to the Every Child Achieves Act (ECSS). The amendment will require states receiving funding from the Department of Education to meet rigorous standards for the prevention and treatment of concussions in student athletes. These standards include the provision of materials on concussion signs and risks in every school, a concussion management plan at schools, return-to-play protocols with evaluation by a health care professional, and post-injury academic accommodations. If states fail to meet these standards, they could lose a portion of their formula grants under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The passage of return-to-play laws is universal in all fifty states, with varying degree of rigor. The requirement for schools to make accommodations for students in the learning process through "return-to-learn" principles is important.

We know from the American Academy of Pediatrics that as many as 3.8 million sports and recreation-related concussions occur every year in the United States. In the last ten years, concussion-related emergency room visits in kids ages 8 to 13 years old have doubled and concussions have risen 200 percent among teens ages 14 to 19. These injuries affect not only future ability to compete in sports but can also be detrimental to students' academic performance and mental health, and cause long-term brain damage.

We understand that it is your intention that this amendment will bring all states in line with evidence-based guidelines for the treatment of sports concussions previously recommended by both the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Academy of Neurology. We support this amendment's emphasis on the role of the Department of Education in creating a safe environment for students playing sports in all schools.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a global network of organizations dedicated to protecting kids from unintentional injuries, the number one cause of death to children in the United States. Safe Kids Worldwide stands ready to help you in this effort in any way that we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Jones". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "A" and a long, horizontal stroke at the end.

Director of Public Policy
Safe Kids Worldwide