

TERRI L. HILL, M.D.

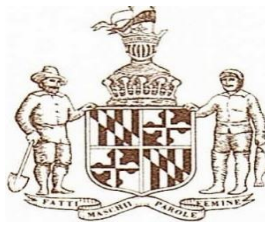
Legislative District 12

Baltimore and Howard Counties

Health and Government Operations
Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations and Health Facilities
Public Health and Minority Health Disparities



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 10, 2022

SUPPORT

HB 435 – Youth Sports Programs – Registrations, Personnel, and Policy

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary, Vice-chair Washington, and members of the Ways and Means Committee, HB 435 extends the best practices and standards practiced by local Parks and Rec and youth sports organizations in Maryland with respect to background screens and safety training for personnel standards of those responsible for oversight our youngest athletes, pee-wee to pre-teen. An offered amendment clarifying that the provision apply only to youth sports below the high school level of play, does so because there are already in place sufficient standards and oversight in place at the high school level of play that address the goals of this bill.

Additional amendments offered 1) remove the additional prerequisite for a youth athlete to receive medical clearance returning them to full academic activities in order to be cleared for return to play; and 2) remove the unnecessary, costly, and overly burdensome inclusion of a credit check as part of the criminal background check.

We require our high school athletic personnel, and most Parks and Rec leagues in the state and many independent leagues require their coaches and other personnel, to undergo criminal background checks and at least basic training in concussion awareness. Certainly our youngest athletes deserve a level of protection, but our younger sports leagues do not uniformly share the same expectations and requirements, despite the fact that risk of recreation and sports related injury or exploitation is greater.

Hb435 would require the coaches, team administrators, and volunteers for youth sports programs under high school level to be trained in not just concussion awareness, but also child safety heat illness recognition / prevention / and treatment, to undergo standard background checks as employed by the National Recreation and Parks Association, to keep a registry of such, require that personnel display I.D. when participating in organized activities, and require that parents be given information regarding the health risks and associated policies and practices.

Most youth sports programs already maintain some type of registry of their coaches, staff, and volunteers and their appropriate training, but they vary across the state in terms of what if any basic safety training or background information is required to serve in these roles of authority and supervision. Programs which do not already maintain a registry could choose to create their own or, as some are already doing, to partner with, or join, another's. The safety training is readily available through a variety of forums, including online, at minimal or no cost.

There are huge social, emotional, health, developmental and social benefits of youth recreation and sports activities, and such activity naturally comes with risk of injury. Where there are reasonable ways to minimize avoidable harm, we should do so. By applying current best practices as the statewide minimal standard,

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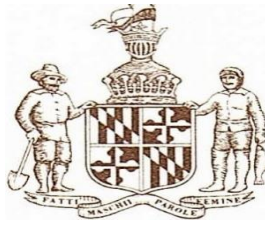
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HB435 helps better meet our shared responsibility for the health and safety of our youngest constituents. I respectfully request adoption of the amendments and a favorable report on the amended bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri Hill".