

**HB935**  
**Public Schools - Venue-Specific Emergency Action Plans –**  
**High School Football Games**

**Testimony in SUPPORT**  
**Bill Sponsor: Delegate Denise Roberts**  
**Tuesday, February 24, 2025, 1:00 p.m.**

Madam Chair Atterbeary and distinguished colleagues of the Maryland House of Delegates, Ways and Means Committee,

For the record, I am Delegate Denise Roberts, from Prince George’s County, and I stand before you today as the primary sponsor of House Bill 935, a bill that is not just a legislative initiative, but a deeply personal mission. This bill is about protecting our student-athletes—our sons and daughters, our neighbors, our future leaders—by ensuring that when they step onto the football field, they have immediate access to lifesaving medical care in case of an emergency.

High school football is a beloved tradition in Maryland. It fosters teamwork, discipline, and a strong sense of community. But we cannot ignore the risks that come with the game. Injuries happen. Some are minor, but others can change a life in an instant. I know this reality firsthand.

In 1985, my son's father was the quarterback at Dunbar High School when he suffered a catastrophic injury during a football game. He broke his neck, severed his spinal cord, and became a quadriplegic. His life was forever changed in a matter of seconds. This tragic incident had a profound impact—not only on him but on his family, his dreams, and his future. Later in life, we and we had a son together, which means I can personally attest to how a devastating injury can alter the course of a life and how it ripples through generations.

This bill is not just about policy—it’s about people. It’s about making sure that no other family has to endure what his family did. It’s about ensuring that when the unthinkable happens, we are prepared to act swiftly. House Bill 935 mandates that a licensed athletic trainer or an ambulance be present at every high school football game. This is not an unnecessary burden; it is a necessary safeguard. Seconds matter in medical emergencies, and access to immediate care can mean the difference between recovery and a lifelong disability—or even life and death.

We have a responsibility to our student-athletes and their families. They trust that when their children step onto the field, every precaution has been taken to keep them safe. This bill ensures we are living up to that trust.

I urge this committee to stand with me and support House Bill 935. Let’s not wait for another tragedy to take action. Let’s lead with courage, compassion, and conviction.

**Thank you, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 935.**