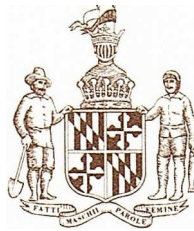


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Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees
Government Operations and
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Public Health and Minority
Health Disparities



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SUPPORT

HB1393 – Youth Sports Programs – Registrations, Personnel, and Policy

March 03, 2025

Dear Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Committee Members,

HB1393 requires youth sports programs below the high school level to adopt specific personnel registration, training, and safety practices. Many local Parks and Rec departments and youth sports leagues around the state already follow these best practices for staff screening and safety training.

At the high school level, both school or community based organized sports require coaches and other personnel undergo criminal background checks and, at a minimum, concussion and basic health training. Below high school level, requirements are less common. This is because the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) and the local school systems coordinate and regulate interscholastic sports, including requirements for staff screening and training, which are widely followed by community-based and private teen sports organizations.

No MPSSAA-like coordinating or oversight authority exists for organized sports in the younger age groups, even though the risks of recreation- and sports-related injury, and of exploitation and abuse is greater. **HB1393** is introduced because our youngest athletes deserve that we have as much concern for their safety and health as for our teens' and should expect the same level of protection from harm, if not more.

HB1393 requires personnel for youth sports programs under the high school level to

- undergo standard background checks as employed by the National Recreation and Parks Association;
- receive training in concussion and child safety heat illness recognition, prevention, and treatment; and display their personnel photo I.D. when participating in organized activities.

And that each program

- maintain a personnel registry including the background checks results, and
- provide parents or guardians with information regarding health risks (and benefits) of participation, and league or organizational health and safety policies.

Maintaining registries of coaches and staff is common, but there is significant variation as to criminal background checks and health and safety training requirements, if any. To comply with the bill, should it be enacted, programs which do not already maintain a registry could choose to create their own or partner with or join another's. Safety training is readily available through a variety of forums, including online, at minimal or no cost. Educational materials, templates, and brochures for parents and guardians are available for a range of youth sports related health topics and need not be created specific for each league or team.

Sports participation carries huge social, emotional, health, and developmental benefits, and comes naturally with risk of injury. **HB1393** helps ensure a level of safety and protection for our youngest constituents that minimizes avoidable harms to help us meet our shared responsibility for their health and well-being. I request a favorable report.

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