

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee.

My name is Kevin Lynott. I serve as an Athletic Director and have worked extensively in high school athletics, including concussion education and on-field safety implementation. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I want to begin by clearly stating that I fully support the intent of this bill. Student-athlete safety — especially regarding concussions — must remain a priority. In Maryland schools, we already operate under a conservative standard: when a concussion is suspected, the athlete is immediately removed and does not return to participation without written medical clearance. That is the standard, and it is the right standard.

My position today is not about weakening concussion safety. It is about strengthening the clarity of how this bill would function during live athletic events.

In real-time competition settings, there is an established chain of command. Officials manage the contest. Coaches remove athletes from participation. Athletic trainers and qualified health professionals evaluate. That structure protects students while preserving order and safety during events.

As currently drafted, the bill expands removal authority without clearly defining how that authority is exercised during live competition. Without clarification, this may unintentionally create confusion, on-field disputes, or inconsistent enforcement across schools.

I strongly support empowering reporting. Anyone — a student, parent, official, or school personnel — should feel confident reporting a suspected concussion. But reporting and executing removal are two different things. Removal during a contest must follow a defined operational process to prevent chaos and ensure consistent application.

Additionally, the language should clearly state that removal is based on suspected concussion or reasonable belief. Non-medical personnel should not be placed in a position that implies diagnosis. Recognition and response are appropriate. Diagnosis is the responsibility of qualified healthcare providers.

I would also encourage the Committee to clarify definitions such as “student” and “school personnel” so the scope aligns with legislative intent and does not unintentionally extend beyond practical implementation.

Finally, I recommend refining the “no deterrence” language so it clearly prohibits retaliation or punishment for reporting, while still allowing schools to establish reasonable operational procedures necessary to manage events safely.

We all share the same goal: protect kids. My request is simply that the bill's language reflects how athletic events actually function in real time, so we enhance safety without creating unintended consequences.

I respectfully support the intent of this legislation and urge the Committee to consider clarifying amendments to strengthen implementation.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to Maryland's student-athletes.